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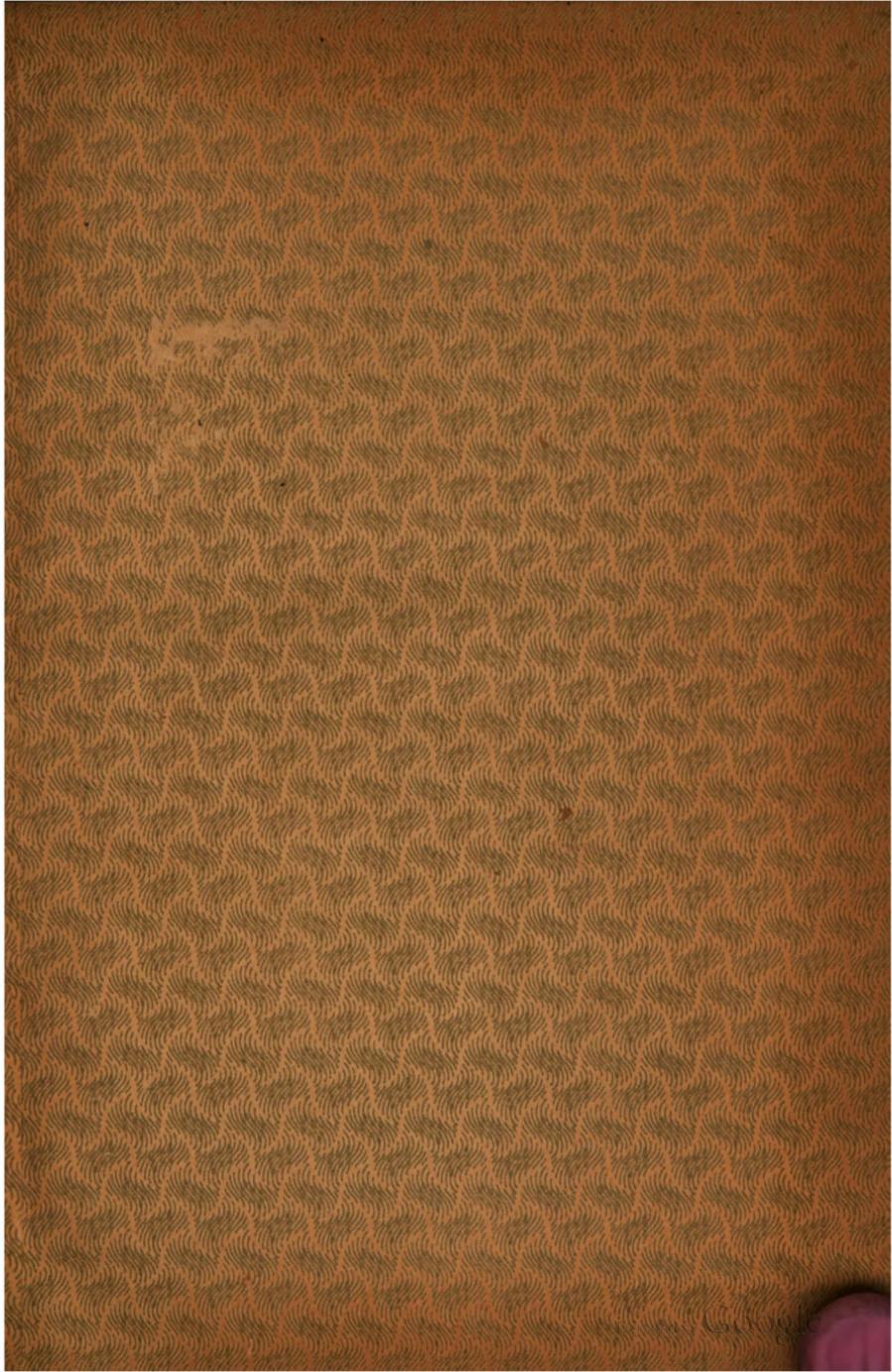
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THE GIFT OF
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A LIFE-CONTRAST

BY

ARODA REYM.

VOLUME I.

H A M B U R G.

J Ü R G E N S E N & B E C K E R.

1895.

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Pedro S. Zulen,
Lima, Peru.
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C O N T E N T S.

	Page
CHAPTER I. Babys Uncles	1
— II. An Evening-Call	17
— III. A Mistaken Idea	27
— IV. The Dinner-Party	38
— V. Happiness	54
— VI. The Tour to London	73
— VII. Richmond and Holborn	87
— VIII. Mr. Clare at Home	98
— IX. The Five-pound-Note	117
— X. Seabreezes	132
— XI. Secret Misgivings	150
— XII. The Talk in the Parlor	163
— XIII. A Notturno	177
— XIV. In the Dispensary	193
— XV. The Engagement-Ring	203
— XVI. A Trust	211
— XVII. An Unexpected Encounter	227
— XVIII. The Young Seamstress	239
— XIX. Vanquished	256
— XX. Brother and Sister	264
— XXI. Ths Scene in the Billiard-room	271

Chapter I.

Babys Uncles.

A second son had been born to the house of Lloyd Graham, Esq, Wavertree Road, Liverpool. He was crying upstairs. This unbaptised scion of the family is a most unimportant personage, but as he himself and everybody else insists upon making a fuss about him, I insist upon making a beginning with him. It seems that the small gentleman sees no reason to be thankful for having been brought to the light of this world, which I hope will prove only a general impression and not a special presentiment. Babys relations were dropping in one after another to see it. One of his uncles was standing on the doorstep and Richard Lansdale, another being interested in him, was driving up in a cab. The former, looking leisurely at the elegant young man, who descended from the vehicle was already possessed of the first news of the week ending with this Saturday afternoon.

„Come to see the baby, Dick?” asked he, when they stood side by side at the entrance. „When I say it looks like a monkey it’s downright flattery, sir; I think Mrs. Graham must be accustomed to such imps not to lose patience.“

„Well, she looks at it with other eyes than yours“ returned Mrs. Grahams brother, „have you heard what the ladies say?“

„Ethel has no answer for my observations, but she smiles on the little one.”

„And Maud, say, Maud?”

„Admits that he is a fright.”

Mr. Lansdale appeared highly pleased with this report. „The very thing for her to do” he said, with a gay laugh. „Miss Graham guards the dignity of the family, but Maud has no considerations. We might have come out together, Allan, the time must have suited very nearly, as we both no doubt left at the close of business?”

„I have won the race though.”

„With despise on my cab, eh, Allan? Well, a man like me does not go his way quite undetained. But does a minute matter?”

„A man like me” — what sort of a man was he indeed? Did Liverpool swarm with business connections of Mr. Lansdales, that at every corner he was forced to halt in deep and earnest converse? Was he profound in the politic wisdom of the country, that he listened or talked to M. P's? Of the noble membership of industrials perhaps, in the cold dawn of the year of grace 1851, when hearts and heads grew warm and warmer in the gigantic foreshadowings of the Great Exhibition? When maidens fancies built in a Crystal Palace, diligence and interprise crowded towards Hyde Park and expectance and triumph looked coyly into the mirrors of the Serpentine. If the baby had not been in that house of Wavertree Road, we would now be talking of the Exhibition. Mr. Lansdale were quite the man for it. I have a notion that he will prove ready and well instructed on the leading questions of the day, that he has a fine taste in objects far a special display of interest and that, if every man has his ambition, he has the ambition to be amiable.

From this it follows that probably he is detained in the streets by acquaintances and friends, fellows of the club

and such other hindrances to a mans speed. On looking at the two uncles of little Master Graham together, one might wonder to discover signs of a more intimate connection than that provening from the marriage of their brother and sister, between them. In character, position, inclination they should be suspected to differ widely. Vanity lurked in Mr. Lansdales waistcoat pockets, it hung on his watchchain, it glided down his lithe and welclad limbs, it sat on his gloves — he was drawing them off just now and on the white left hand below shone forth a deep red scar — was there vanity in that too? How could those rare violetblue eyes help gazing a little conceitedly on their belongings though, and vanity, surrounded by nature with every means and desirabilities incumbent on it, does not look so very much out of place.

If Richards characteristic was beauty and suavity of manner, Allan Grahams appearance was the reverse. Not that this is the reason to make their companionship unadapted to the rules of harmony, quite the contrary maybe — but a carelessness, not to say sharpness of disposition in young Graham might imply, that he would never pay the dues to Mr. Lansdales superior gifts and rather laugh them to scorn. So much the better augury for the latters humour, when he had made the impartial one his bosom friend. They were about the same age; Allan looked older with a sort of face, which though never very bright lasts out in age what it has borrowed from youth. His dress was plain, yet it looked warmer in the chill spring weather than Lansdales finery, altogether he had an air of not thinking himself prejudiced against his wealthier comrade. Having reached the stairs to seek at once Mrs. Grahams apartments, the young men were greeted by the voice of Miss Maud, standing on the landing, her eye delightfully suggestive of being glad to look down once in a way upon two figures whom she was obliged to look up to on even ground.

She was as pretty a girl as any mortal may expect to meet in these days of ours and her hair had an indefinable air of being done more than once in a day.

„Oh Richard, you are only now coming!“ she cried—then pausing and waiting till he could shake hands with her, she added bluntly, her merriness dancing in the mirrors of his eyes as they encountered each other: „Are you a hero, Mr. Lansdale?“

„You must know, heroes exist only in ladies' minds?“

„No they do not, you have heroes as well as ourselves. You have heroes who cut off the tail of a Chinese, who inoculate Christianity till all savages blessedly die of it and who invent things that kill in the making and kill in the using. Is it not so, Allan?“

„When you are copying me, ask another if it is like.“

„Allan has no hero. Richard, they have hit on a name for the baby, Gwendoline and Lloyd. Being born in this time of wonders, the child shall be called Albert. He'll be an impediment to Gwendolines going to the Exhibition, by the by; well, what do you say to Albert?“

Allan only gave a short laugh.

Richard was more explicit: „A capital idea! Let the loyal subjects name be Albert. Bertie, of course, for me. Where is my wee, wee, darling Bertie? First-rate to know my nephews name, before I see him. It was not so with little Richard, and rather an inconvenience I found it.“

It became Miss Mauds urgent duty to introduce the baby. We cannot detain ourselves with the inquiry whether Mr. Lansdale be a hero, because she is leading the way to the baby. I declare it to be, without having the audacity to ask the mothers permission — a monster. I would much rather know why she asked that question about the heroship. Something more will come out by and by no doubt, at the tea-table, where the baby is not. After the levee of Master Bertie, Lloyd Graham arriving home, the

admiration was prolonged for several minutes. Then it was time to repair to the cosy parlour, its crackling chimney-fire, its table strewn with the newest weeklies, the ladies' work under the lamp and the hopes of a pleasant evening in every reflected spark of light. Teathings were ready, but no tea as yet made. Maud evidently had no intention to attend to that, she took up a number of "Household Words" and seated herself as if going to rise and leave the room on the next instant. "Her heart was with baby, her heart was not here." Richard cast swift glances at her, as if expecting some address from her, but Miss Maud's nose was between the pages and she left him to her brothers. Lloyd said: "We have been expecting you at least yesterday. Indeed for several days, my dear Lansdale, since we have heard a very startling —"

"Don't" suddenly exclaimed the young lady, awakening from "Household Words" and shaking her head imperatively.

"What I did not mention on purpose before Gwendoline" proceeded Lloyd.

"Don't now!" reiterated Maud, rising with a pout, laying Dicken's new paper on the table and appropriating an illustrated periodical: "Richard, you might have come sooner, as you have absolutely nothing to do at present."

"I have Miss, I have plenty to do. Since last you saw me I have engaged on the staff of a greater merchant than Robertson Brothers were, who sought misunderstandings with me."

"I suppose you tired out their patience with not coming" presumed Miss Maud.

"Does that probability easily present itself to you?" he returned, with rather a meaning smile.

"Easily enough" — perhaps meaningly too.

"I am now going to enter as volunteer in the house of a Mr. Rosen, of Castle Street," pursued he, resting 'that

left hand with the scar, on the table, conscious of it, though his attention was directed to Maud.

„Rosen?” exclaimed Lloyd but Maud broke in: „Most lucky, when you think you have bettered yourself; but you were always lucky. Is the gentleman a cotton-dealer?”

„One of the most important cotton-merchants in the market. He has his own vessels between the States and England afloat and vast connections, the very employer for me, who may be able to do great things yet. The man born under the star of gold always has the first chance for future, I daresay, when he is not a fool, which I hope I am not.”

„No, you are not” assented Maud.

„I say, gold is a weight on life and I wouldn’t call it a star” dissented Allan

„I would use it of course for the furtherance of fellowmen, for popular institutions, for the progress and relief of the poorer classes, as my father does. Oh a great deal can be done. And I have an early experience to assist me. I am looking about me with open eyes every day of my existence besides, that the opportunity for charity may not find me unprepared”

„Do you reckon your opportunity not yet begun?” asked Allan.

„I cannot count the penny for the beggar, nor the sovereign for a strange undertaking. I am fancying my own initiative, my own building, my own direction. It is just possible for me to attain the necessary means for it and to lay them out well.”

„Certainly” replied Maud, tapping the ground in occult impatience with her little foot looking towards the door Richard retired his wounded left and began: „You have called me a hero, Maud —”

„No, I have not, I have only asked if you were one or not, and I’ll make up my mind about it myself,” she

cut him short. „Tick, tick, how the clock is going, in its even, spiritless way. I should like to give it a shake.” The worst sign imaginable, when a girl hears the ticking of a clock through the conversation and feels annoyed by it. Richard Lansdale frowned on his bloodred cut. There was vanity in it. Lloyd had lit his pipe, silent as it seemed under Maud's interdict of his first-introduced topic. There was a noise in the passage; Maud's features brightened. Her fingers had grown fidgety with the poor leaves of the newspaper, but presently she became unconcerned, resigned her grip over the conversation and looked inwardly amused at the company's not very lively faces. Surely she had never meant to entertain it agreeably nor to act as the charm of the teatable.

The door opened. A handsome young lady entered dark, grave-looking and with an obvious indication of self-reliance in her manner. She advanced, her eye attracted towards the figure of the guest, her features rendered veritably striking by a deep flush that rose to her cheeks. There was something peculiar in her appearance, though one could not tell exactly what — if it was that she had an especial originality by nature, or that the cut of her attire diverged a little from the custom of the time or anything else yet, that I do not know. Lansdale rose to greet her: „Miss Graham!”

„Oh Mr. Lansdale, we have been so anxious to see you — —.”

They met with the ease of near acquaintanceship and household intimacy, far however from the careless familiarity of intercourse between Ethel Graham's younger sister and her brother-in-law. Maud was a child, though of eighteen years, Ethel was a lady. A close friendship had from earliest days united the families of Lansdale and Graham, while Lloyd and Richards' elder brothers as yet graced the nursery in longclothes, and neighborhood, the great

arbiter of love and strife, drew an indissoluble knot. Maud had remained staunch to her knowledge of Richard Lansdale as a good-humored delightful elder play-fellow unto an age where Ethel would long have substituted the reserve of woman towards man for the thoughtless enjoyment of younger years. There was Maud and Richard still with the casual change of appellation by a moments whim, but Ethel and Richard had never been uttered in the Liverpool homesteads, not loudly at least. Their childhoods friendship did not belong to Liverpool, but to the good English city of Coketown whose grinding jaws worked out the vital substance for the two families. Richard Landsdales father was rather of the grinding sort and certainly counted hard cash among his attachments, but there was something gentler in him too, which he took no pains to hide. He was considered one of the most benevolent as well as the richest men of his native town, and with a simplicity of habits preserved from his less prosperous years, he spared all the more funds to invest in philanthropic enterprises, beginning with the workmen of his own factories and ending with every stray creature cast on the compassion of society. From these circumstances his youngest sons ambition took the direction already indicated of one day occupying old Mr. Lansdales enviable position of a loved, popular and far-esteemed citizen.

Mr. Grahams course had run different. Making a far greater display of wealth and luxury than his neighbor, a crash in business threw down the golden palaces of his fortunes for once and all. He retired for ever from the scene of his past, proceeding at last to London, with the forlorn hope of a pending law-suit taking possession of him for the rest of his life, while his wife, with other views on the measures to be taken, stopped in her birthplace Liverpool, where she finished her childrens education with a small remnant of private property saved from the ruin.

Lloyd, her eldest child, soon made way for himself in the world with a modest, cheery spirit, that gave him the confidence, still very young, to go over to Coketown and ask sweet Gwendoline Landsdale for his wife. He begged her from her father with an earnest condition, namely, that she should be given to him without dowry, and more, without the future hope of money. He bade her be his in the trust of being able to supply her wants and desires, but his sense of honour would not brook the faintest semblance of unworthy considerations upon his suit. Lloyd had just touched the right key of old Mr. Landsdale's heart, who everywhere advocated for proper exertion, which had built his own standing in life.

Thus the two families, separated a little by the changes in dwelling and pursuit, were again more closely drawn together, meeting in Coketown and in Liverpool. Richard, repairing to the latter port for his commercial improvement, brought the agreeable relations to their full, establishing his second home at Lloyd Grahams and his third indeed at the elder Mrs. Grahams, not far off. The while he had chosen lodgings in Birkenhead, having a great predilection for the daily passage over the Mersey and being amply capable to indulge in any youthful fancy of his. In Birkenhead his comrade Allan had found employment in a druggist-shop, conducive to their spending many a leisure hour together.

Still that disparity between Allan and Richard exists, and I do not exactly see a reason for earnest friendship. Richard indeed is everybodys friend and will associate with gruff Brown for the harmony of counterpart and with bright Jones for the grace of sequel. Yet to see Allan so often, so predeleictly in Richards company, so affectionately by his side, strikes me it strikes me decidedly.

Ethel Graham declared in the name of the family that they had been anxious to see Mr. Landsdale. Maud had

not quite expressed that, before. I daresay she had not quite expressed what she meant at all. However now, as it goes in the fairytale, where everything does wrong at first and does right as soon as the right impulse is given, the right person having made her entrance everything got into a delightful flow. Lloyd talked, Maud asked, Richard no more frowned on the scar on his hand. Quite the contrary, he told its history to the company. The fact is, that the Grahams had been informed through the newspaper that a desperate nightly assault had been practised in an obscure alley down town, which would probably have ended in the assassination of a certain Mr. Rosen, a wellknown merchant of the port, if a Mr. Lansdale had not happily interfered, followed by another gentleman whose name was not mentioned. None of the criminals were as yet apprehended, and the whole police put astir. On this startling account rested Mr Lansdales candidatesship for heroism, the anxiety to know bis own report, his probable disappointment at the indifference of his reception. Miss Mauds manner under the circumstances indeed is quite unintelligible had she not absolutely taken pains to postpone a communication on the most surprising subject ever imposed on their simple hometalk? Miss Maud rejects the indictment of curiosity made to her sex, but has she not failed even to more than curiosity?

Her obstinacy in avoiding that topic had quite subsided by this time and mayhap was never held more animated conference in that room, while Ethel, notwithstanding her glowing interest in it, was making the most delicious tea.

She came from her mothers to make that tea, while Maud, spending her whole days at her brothers and sister in-laws, only entertained herself and her hosts as best she could.

“Coming from our house the other night,” cried Maud, “you have had this terrible bloody adventure!”

„Yes, going with Allan to look in upon uncle Arthurs as we told you —.”

„Allan is the other gentleman, who has not given his name?”

„I had no busness to give it, Richard solely is the man.”

„Ah, uncle Arthur is near a bad neighbourhood” said Ethel.

„In the midst of the lost sheep of Israel, like a good shepherd as he is. The reverend gentleman was not at home when we called, but his old Martha told us, that he had gone to some Barbara Reeves or other and had left his light burning in the study, which meant that he would return, in a moment. „Let us go round the corner and meet him, I said to Allan. So we walked round that corner and the next, and I rather liked the night in that miserable, tumble-down district, where every house is suggestive of a secret grievance interesting to listen to. Allan was ready enough to proceed, you may be sure, and we got happily fortgeful of promenading in a century that protects the poor, knows all about hygiene and is getting very clearheaded and wellmanaged on the whole. The lights were few of course in the street, and the fewer people who traversed it looked dim like them and a bit romantic. Well, by and by something like a stifled cry and a scuffle reached our ears, we hurried in the direction of the suspicious sounds, I before and Allan behind, I having the longer legs, until we came to the scene of action. You know it from the papers already, I daresay — ” the narrator artfully interrupted himself, as if negligently imagining his hearers satisfied.

„Now you are coming to the point I suppose” answered Maud.

„I have led up the explanation to the point at which you are already informed.

„Don't talk nonsense but go on.”

„Well, the thing is very simple. No living soul was to be seen all round, but on the righthand pavement a man

was lying on the ground, wrestling yet, it seemed, with two figures bent over him and a third was standing, just turning his face, looking hideously black, towards me, as if in the act of leaving the rest. Naturally I dashed forward, crying out: „Halloo, what are yon doing there?” and seized one of the rascals by his neckcloth. The man was dreadfully surprised and let fall a pistol to the ground, which I grasped, the while the first man turned upon me, also with a pistol in his hand. „Don't fire!” cried the third robber, in compensation for which injunction I got this scratch over the hand with a bowie knife. „But I will fire,” I bawled out, grasping my pistol tight, when the first wretch growled. „Damn you all” and some uncouth expostulation superadded to it, taking the lead in running from the contest, the other two likewise abandoned the affair and followed in his track. This resulted probably on their observing Allan coming up, so I am persuaded I must shift the whole merit of the rescue on his devoted shoulders, and I'm glad to do it” concluded the modest hero.

„Thank you,” said Allan „don't force upon me a part in the matter, to show me off as dummy by the side of your active exertions.”

„His has been the danger,” murmured Ethel, her fingers having grown cold and stiff at their occupation by the excitement of the tale, while the hot blood made wild rushes at the beating of her heart. „Oh, Mr. Lansdale, they might have done you a deal of harm.”

„A worse one than this little souvenir,” replied Mr. Lansdale with a laugh, holding out his hand, which Miss Maud now discreetly bent over on tiptoe to inspect. Ethels gaze was fastened on it also, but she did not come so near.

„If they had had pluck,” opined Richard. „they should have got the better of it. What should we two, unarmed as we were, do on the instant against their pistols and

knives? But burglars, robbers, thieves are all a pack of cowards. They could have finished with their first prey, as they intended, and sent us round for the police after. They were quite sufficient to cut my throat anyhow and yet while I held the pistol I felt a knife at my spine and a cudgel over my head. They were three, you know."

Ethels eyes flashed singularly and suddenly a torrent broke from her compressed lips: „Oh, that the world were cleaned from such miserable, wicked horrors of men! Oh that they could all be taken out from among us, not to disgrace England any more and walk stealthily in the shadow of honest men. To allow them to be a menace to the good, that it is possible they could kill a friend leaving our house unconsciously of an evening, that they can disturb the peace of the honest and impart a fear to the streets of a city like Liverpool!"

„A city like Liverpool" repeated Allan in a somewhat dirisive tone.

„I would bring close judgment upon them, if I were in power," pursued Miss Graham, roused to an agitation that was almost furious. „I would have that done before anything, that man might go safe from man in the first seaport of the world, in a civilized, noble country."

„London goes first," interrupted Allan, „are you going to clean London?"

„All — I would not allow any bad members to remain as a menace to society and take care that no new ones accrued to them — —"

„By providing every subject with the necessities of honest life?"

„If they died of hunger, they could not be more miserable than they must be now. Even so they should never become criminals."

„Make the people understand that," said Allan.

„But, Miss Graham," observed Richard, drawing near the

table as she began to pour out the tea, „what do you propose to do to get rid of these poor, nasty malevolents, having caught them? Are you going to make a clean sweep of them, give them capital punishment indeed?”

Ethel paused the slightest thought of a moment, then responded. „Wouldn't they be good to make up the army and take their chance of life and death instead of the fine, able men, who are shamefully wasted on the battle-fields of Asia and even Europe? Perhaps that would be quite to their liking; it ought to be in their line.”

Richard smiled; Allan laughed outrageously. „The criminal army! Surely my sister despises the profession and gives the cue how it is to be regarded. I do fear, my dear, that our criminals are too few as well as too much for that purpose. However, shall we publish the lucid idea?”

But Ethel now brought back inquiry to the real and foremost subject of interest. „That man lying on the ground,” she asked, „the victim of the three, how did you find him?”

„He was an old gentleman, faintly trying to rise, when we stepped near.”

„Not old,” contradicted Allan, „I wouldn't give him fifty, only that his hair is mingled with grey. We assisted him and he soon recovered from the dizziness of a blow, that left its bloody mark visible on the back of his head. „Good God!” he exclaimed, „I was near a terrible death, and oh, my poor child then! I saw it before me and was thinking of my home, Gentlemen, he turned to us, ,you have done me such a service as I have never owned to any living creature before.”

„Which will make me your debtor through life, for I can never tell you and show you what I feel at this moment.”

„He was extraordinarily moved of course,” Allan continued. „Yet life is not the greatest thing that can be saved on earth, I would say.”

„If not the greatest, it must be one of the greatest,” Ethel interposed. „And you exposed your own life to do it, Mr. Lansdale.“

„Oh well, it was the only thing I could do at the moment.“

„Indeed it was; I hope to Heaven we shall never have need to think you in such a position again“

„I rather fancy occasions for valor, when the hero himself is there to describe them to me“ remarked Maud. „I would die of fear at the time, but when all is concluded it's all the more delightful.“

„I certainly find it just agreeable to have been in the way of obliging a very nice gentleman to such an extent. If you were conferring knighthood upon me on account of it, Lady Maud, exalting the glory of our family, I should be doubly charmed. I may as well confide to you that I have quite a sorry, helpless ambition or vanity, as you may please to call it, of being an ornament to my name and the more precious names attached to it.“

They bantered all the evening in this manner, he and Maud, the latter getting much the better of her sister in the genius of saying the right things which Richard wished to hear. Ethel showed herself solicitous about the danger that had befallen him so unexpectedly, but on his valor she was reticent and in the hymns of his praise she did not join not she. However, she seemed to like listening to the lively repartee flashing around her and when conversation settled on a more serious theme Richard Lansdale turned to her.

„He is a German as you will have argued from his name. Pretty well anglicised though, I should imagine. He asked our names and as we became more acquainted with unusual rapidity we ended by my attaching myself to his mercantile establishment next day. That's my good luck, in truth, having lost a place considered good, to save a better employers life. That assault upon him, he

told us, seemed to have been partly actuated by a motive of vengeance; he recognized a seaman in one of his aggressors, belonging to a ship recently consigned to him from New Orleans. On board that vessel on the tour to Europe, most cruel treatment had been offered to one of the crew, a young man somewhat limited in his wits, particularly from the captain and his first mate. Joe Birch, I think the sailors name, hit upon the idea of seeking redress at Mr. Rosens, who fiercely took up the case and had the two barbarians convicted before the police-court. Thus he believes that they have set some ill disposed subjects on an enterprise of treacherous retaliation which was most surely intended as a murder."

"No doubt however they put themselves, or rather that marine creature of theirs put himself into connivance with a regular pickpocket, for Mr. Rosen, touching his breast observed: "They have taken my watch; well, let it go, that's not my life."

"I caught a glimpse of one of the bravoes" Allan added, "and asked the gentleman if that seaman he knew sported hair like sheeps wool upon his head, for that struck me, be his face ever so bedizened with paint or coaltar or anything. He said no, his man had a long black beard. So far a pity I have not a notion of the blackguard I should long to catch."

"Oh they will not now turn their wrath upon you?" Ethel exclaimed. "What an uneasy feeling to know they have escaped."

"We two have not more incurred their displeasure, I daresay, than dozens will have done on diverse occasions", Allan smiled. "And these selfsame men probably have done with Mr. Rosen too, as that proposed vengeance was no affair of their own. The sharper besides surely is overcontent with his watch and left no interest behind him. I have a shrewd notion that he was on the

point of decamping from his comrades when we came in upon them."

"Well, the happy thought of Mr. Rosen and his child shall be my last one to-night. He has no wife, it seems?"

"No, he is a widower with but one daughter, I have learned."

"I have a fancy to know, what sort of a girl it was, who received Mr. Rosen at home after that desperate encounter", Allan Graham remarked.

Chapter II.

An Evening-Call.

"My dear Mr. Lansdale, I should like you to take me to see your sister to-night," Mr. Rosen said, at the close of one of the following weeks, with an almost tender touch in his manner towards the young man, as Richard found him loitering in the street not far from the office, after the clock had struck the hour for departure. "My own house will be silent to-night, for Winifred has gone to a ball with her aunt and I arranged for taking my dinner out-of-doors. I finished that inevitable business just now and am indulging the dream of passing a pleasant evening somewhat out of the rule. Will you take it upon you to introduce me at Mrs. Grahams house, my good young friend?"

"If you do not confer too high an honour upon us, you will distinguish this night from all other delightful evenings."

"Then I shall also meet again Mr. Allan Graham," mused the good humoured gentleman. He had several times testified that he had not forgotten the young man since their first encounter, but only Richard had hitherto availed himself of the invitation to frequent Mr. Rosens hospitable house. "Don't you think," pursued the kind-hearted merchant,

„that I could also do him some service in any way? I would no more care to lose sight of him than I would of you.”

„I think, sir, that he is more deserving of your favour than I am myself, but that he would not be quite as ready to take advantage of it. I believe that Allan, from his retiring nature, loses many a chance of friendship, which I would be sorry to forego.”

„Yours is a character to engage affection easily, while others perhaps need a little assistance in forming new relations. You are qualifying yourself, as you often indicate, for a public friend and a position of consequence. I not only sincerely wish it for you, but I would prophecy it from your will and endowments.”

„A will and a way” merrily rejoined the amiable, philanthropie, promising Richard. The two gentlemen very pleasantly drove out to Wavertree Road, with never a hitch in their dialogue. When could a misluck befall conversation, while Richard Lansdale was a party to it, so able, so light, so unpretentious?

Higher waxed exertion and pleasure, when Mr. Rosen was received in Mrs. Lloyd’s dainty little drawingroom, when they all, feeling very flattered, attended on the visitor and of course, the young heros feat made the opening of proceedings. Maud was not present at first, but she speedily made her appearance.

„Oh what a pity,” was her earnest ejaculation, „that I have to bring word that mamma is not coming, because old Mrs. Belfast is unluckily laid up with her usual indisposition. Dearest Gwen, is it long already since Mr. Rosen arrived?”

„Barely five minutes, my dear young lady,” smiled the gentleman, overhearing the question, „but yet long enough to make me particularly grateful for having entered such a

warmhearted family. I am really sorry if I have missed to-night the opportunity of becoming known to Mrs. Graham, as the mother of one of my rescuers."

"You call Allan your rescuer too," exclaimed Maud, gratified, "oh!"

"I certainly connect him very nearly with the hour of my most providential escape," Mr. Rosen replied, laying his hand on the young mans shoulder. — "though you seem averse to allowing my claim on our wonderfully fated acquaintanceship, Mr. Graham," he added.

"Not as soon as it is made on the understanding that I have nothing to do with the happy preservation of your life, which I thought you were celebrating in your friendly advances to us. I deem kindness a thing to be glad of, my dear sir."

"Oh, you see, that he is not less sensible of the honour you are doing us, than myself", Richard Lansdale commented, "though possibly you judged him rather mute until now. Allan, I am glad, that you do not hold out any longer."

"I do not call kindness an honour conferred, but would consider it becoming the recipient of a mans goodness." Allan rejoined "I hope you will allow for so much independence in me, Mr Rosen, without terming me uncivil."

"But I may now have the pleasure to put you on the list of my guests, Mr Graham?" The merchant proceeded to indicate, that his home was always open to evening visitors in an easy, comfortable way, while statelier entertainments were more favoured by his sister-in-law, who conducted his household, than by himself. The former, Mrs. Osborne, with her daughter Georgiana, had joined the family after her husbands demise, not many years back, instituting themselves as companions to Miss Rosen, then beginning to grow into the more developed graces of maidenhood. Winifred had been left a little lonelier than the generality of girls in her station, by the early death

of her mother and the jealous solicitude of her father, who would not entrust her out of home for education, but was by the rule of her aunt, thrown into just the reverse of her former experience. Mr. Rosen resumed his taste for unceremonious sociality and it may well be imagined that it was not an indulgence disdained by many of his young volunteers or Miss Georgianas ample train to enjoy the hospitality of the house in Princes' Park.

The elder gentleman however, having secured Allans attendance on his parties, making himself most amiably at home in Mrs. Lloyds circle, particularly fascinated by the lively Maud, proceeded to sue her as a friend for his daughter. Mrs. Osborne and the young ladies should have the pleasure of calling on the family in Wavertree Road and arrange for an opening invitation.

Oh Maud the bright, the winning! How Richard took note of her charming his senior! How he approved of her laughs, of her sayings, of her dimples! How little Mr. Rosen regretted having made approaches to the smiling sistership. He liked Ethel too, but she was not quite for love at first sight. It was not overstrained modesty, it was not timidity, that made her difficult of access in many cases, it was a severity of demeanour somehow akin to pride.

„Oh, so frightened as we were!" I hear Maud saying, fixing my attention on the progress of conversation. „And those two brothers of ours did not think it worth while to come out to us on either of the following nights."

„Little in a hurry were you though to ask us about the frightful occurrence, when we did come," Richard remarked in an undertone. „I did not think you vindictive, Maud."

„Nor am I, but I like to hear a serious story at leisure" the young lady retorted indolently.

Mr. Rosen afterwards took opportunity to remark the

crayon portrait of a pretty child's head over the mantelpiece.

"My first little boy" Gwendoline smilingly explained.
"It's very like, I hope I may show him yet to you one day."

"This picture is perhaps executed by one of the young ladies? It is an amateur's hand that drew it, I should say love of the subject as well as of the work in it."

"Oh, they couldn't do that!" Mrs. Lloyd frankly declared.
"It is my brother's talent to sketch portraits from life.
He has made several trials to portray his godson and this one proved the best."

"I tried until I approximately got what I wanted, that is the way to attain to perfection, is it not, Mr. Rosen?"

"You are wise for a young man of such multiplied talents," laughingly returned the interrogated gentleman,
"genius so often runs short in the virtue of perseverance.
I discover you respectively as a lover of literature, of
music and the fine arts and congratulate you upon crowning
your gifts with patience."

"I ought to be and do all this, you will admit. The ladies here would indeed think little of me, if I defaulted against the beau ideal of a future Maecen."

"Surely you would lose all your standing" confirmed Maud.

"We have set up no ideals about him," Ethel however interposed, "we only expect from him what we know him to be."

"But, my dear Miss Graham, if you would fain not raise any ideal expectations about our young friend, you surely will not object if our gratitude prompts us to regard him somewhat in the light of a hero."

"I would certainly do so in the present case, as we cannot proclaim him a hero, Mr. Rosen, for obeying so natural an impulse as succouring a life in danger. We would always have expected him to do as much."

"I am rather loath to revert to the actual circumstances

of that occasion, but I may assure you, Miss Graham, that his certainly was a deed of bravery."

"A man should always be ready for bravery when opportunity offers." She seemed to have felt impelled to this disclaimer of the admiration lavished on Richards' comportment, vindicating the standing of the whole man in the protest against the exaltation of a single act.

She had set up no ideal in him. Oh no! She knew him. Not the least doubt. Let no one say she only knows what she expects from him. For the confidence, the beauty, the reliance of that high, warm heart, may no one believe only that and not more.

How does Richard take her appreciation of the case, which she has pointedly maintained on every occasion that the theme was made the most of in the little household? I suppose he listened to Maud and thought it all the better that the talk was left to her. Though he participated in Ethel's estimate, it was amusing to hear Maud extolling him on the murderous incident amusing only, to a modest ear.

"Here you have Miss Grahams accomplishment" said Richard, pointing to a portfolio adorned by a lovely flowerpiece executed in watercolours. "Do those sprigs of heather not look natural?"

"The colours are rarely so well hit," Mr. Rosen assented, "I observe a special art in your tinting the shadows of white varieties. You are indeed possessed of a very pleasing talent, Miss Graham."

"I am happy to be; any gift of that sort is a great pleasure," the young lady replied, without an attempt to deny the visitors asseveration. — Conversation now took advantage of a slight variation to turn to the topic of the day and expound on the manifold suggestions about the Exhibition.

Mr. Rosen stayed to tea, Mr. Rosen sat in the little parlour with them, and when he had gone, there was no end of Mr. Rosen yet. On leaving he said: „Coming from such a home, my dear young friends, I can dream but of little I could do for the furtherance of the lives that saved mine.”

„Thank you,” said Richard, „in the name of all the family, which I feel happy to call mine.”

„How amiable Mr. Rosen is!” Maud cried, beginning the habitual session of criticism on the absent. „I do hope Mrs. Osborne will make her appearance soon, as promised.”

„No doubt she will, as Mr. Rosen said so” remarked Ethel with moderation on her sisters impetuosity.

„He was in reality pleased with us, don’t you believe it?” Mrs. Lloyd mused with much concern.

„Why should not he?” Miss Graham again reassured, „I see no reason to doubt his professions, which certainly expressed as much.”

They dived so deep into their observations and conclusions, those good people, that at length Ethel found it incumbent on her to say: „I think, Allan, you must take us home now or mamma will have misgivings whether we did not get lost somehow.” But Allan surely was only sufficient protection for one lady, so Richard Lansdale engaged for the other. They were in the habit of arranging thus sometimes, to everybodys increased contentment, merrily wending their way home.

Lloyd with his bedroom candle in his hand, the while was saying to Gwendoline: „Quite a memorable day this, my love. Mr. Rosen is a very nice man to become acquainted with indeed, and besides, in our brothers’ case his friendship is a thing not to be overlooked. It can but prove beneficial for Richard and may be a good thing for Allan.”

It may be a good thing for Allan. Let it rest there. I shall never say anything against it. —

Mrs. Osborne soon came with Winifred Rosen to call on Mrs. Graham. Her manner was in the highest degree amiable, by nature as well as by intention. The ladies of Wavertree Road were charmed with the visit, but I suppose the cottonmerchants dames took it more coolly. Winifred however was warmed with gratitude in her cherished parents behalf though perhaps she inclined not to extend it in its highest fervour far over the actual deliverer of the latter. Intercourse was established in consequence and it did not last long ere it was brought upon an easy footing, Winifred too seeming to favour the closer alliance with the Misses Graham, wished by her father, though leaning rather to Ethel than to Maud in her beginning attachment, it seemed. So it came about, that the whole group of our friends grew tolerably well familiar to the blazing drawing-room in Princes Park, in not too lengthened a period. —

On another evening we have Mr. Lansdale and Allan remaining at Birkenhead, passing the hours as best they may in the less alluring manner proper to the sex distinguished from the fair one, left to itself. Sometimes Richard induced his friend to go to the club with him or he wanted to pay seats in the theatre for both, which however Allan did not like to accept. To-night the latter had met Richard in the street, when the young swell begged to introduce to him one of his gay companions, the son of a M. P. Lansdale had a good scent to find out the sons of M. P.'s and he was on their scent purposely, little as it looked so. He took titles, offices, ranks and stations lightly, he was so superior in his views to the hackneyed conceptions of the ordinary adulator, a liberal man indeed to the last degree, yet so far he saw a difference in the general type of man, that he liked to sport a noble friend before a

humble friend and have his laugh about the former with the latter and his lofty affability in commenting of the letter to the former.

Allan was not allowed to excuse himself from the club this time. No, they would all three go and enjoy the society of all the nice fellows there. Richard was quite a feature among them and he knew it. Young Mr. Bickering, the representative of a representative of the nation had not failed to employ all art in behalf of a suitable appearance-nature had given him a thin face, pointed nose and fair hair. Mr. Lansdale derived the happy acquaintanceship from Mr. Rosens parties.

„An entertaining little creature, Miss Rosen, yes. I like brunettes of a generality. Having seen so many, I yet like a new one; considering her as a lady, she is still very new. Sixteen?” throwing out the question as if Richard were her guardian and ought to know.

„Sweet Seventeen perhaps?” Richard returned.

„I can't say. I don't care. Look at Miss Osborne, she is a noble girl, an awfully fine lady. Indeed, I go to the Rosens on account of her. Only on account of her. An English beauty. Miss Rosen is half German, I suppose.”

„You prefer the English style?”

„Infinitely.”

„When you only suppose that the young lady has something German in her appearance you cannot have a decided opinion on that score yet, I should say,” Allan attacked the weak point of the critics declarations.

„Genuine stuff must be best. I have been as often as four times a week at Mrs. Osbornes parties.”

„Mr. Rosens, you mean.”

„I dont know what phrases I exchange with old Rosen. One must pay him his tribute, you know. I don't care for Germans, I have no opinion at all about them.” — Very probable that.

„But Mr. Rosen might give one an opinion of a German, and not a bad one either,” expostulated Richard.

„Pooh, what do Germans concern me at all!”

„Do you know” replied Richard, „Mr. Rosen is our countryman. He is a Saxon and we are Saxons too. Anglo-Saxons, that’s all one. If you don’t come from the Normans your pedigree lies at the door of George Rosens great-great-grandfathers. What’s the use of abusing our neighbours on the continent, we only make game of our own blood ‘relations.’”

„Have you noted how Rosen pronounces the endsyllables of denominations? How he sounds the ing’ in any word? And the expressions he sometimes applies!”

„For instance?”

Talk went on in this way lively enough for Richard and young Bickering — Allan on the contrary falling off entirely by and by, giving short monosyllabic answers when required, till they reached the portal of the clubroom. Bickering ran up the stairs before them, white Allan halted on the threshold, with the light of a lamp falling glaringly on his countenance. Two red spots burned on his cheeks.

„How unusually handsome you look” Richard said, standing still a moment and looking at him.

„Then you think a man in anger handsome” said Allan. „I am not going up now, Richard. If I had spoken at all on our way hither, I should have picked a quarrel with that young scamp. How can you associate with him, I wonder.” „I don’t take him for my bosom friend,” was the laughing reply.

„Having characterized himself by such a conversation, I would show him to be below the trouble of remonstrating about him, by letting him take his course, and us ours. You should not do him the honour of entering into discourse with him.”

„One talks with all kinds of people.”

„One should not fraternize with illnatured people.”

„That would not make them better. Do you think he cares whether we speak with him or not? Our opinion does not change him. We cannot flatter our attitude towards him to exercise any influence. I laugh at such foolery."

„And with it. Good night, Richard."

Chapter III.

A Mistaken Idea.

A quiet domain was the dwelling of Mrs. Robert Graham, Mrs. Lloyd Grahams mother-in-law. Entering her door might savour of stepping from the din and hurry of our age back into some old-world century, which, if it never possessed that twilight charm adduced to our imaginations of the past, still preserves the idea of a singularly tranquil and stable home enjoyment in a wellconstituted middle class family. I am far from saying that there was anything old fashioned in Mrs. Grahams little parlour, or something grandmotherly in her personal appearance, quite the contrary, she was not an inch behind the present in her convictions, tastes or interests. Only the gentle spirit of that house always struck me silently in that way, and I did not fail to discover that of its two principal mistresses it clung the more obviously to Miss Ethel than to Mrs. Robert. Ethels hand was in the neatness of the chambers, in the ostensible pride of their homely, womanly decoration, in the needle work on the windowseat and the handicraft exerted to keep everything in its proper order. Ethel was a ruling power here, not less than an assistant one in the management of each days demand. There was no trace of idling away hours with a novelbook, of longing for free-air exercise with tennisball and rocket stick, of any ornament laboriously invented to dazzle a strangers eye

with spurious pretension. They took delight in the even stitches of their plain sewing, Mrs. Graham and her eldest daughter, in the tidy heaps of linen in yonder drawers, in the folds of the curtains and the patiently tended flowers on the windowsill. The books of the darkwooded bookcase looked as if they knew themselves to be the culmination of pleasure, the noble aspiration reserved for measured hours, instead of assuming that negligent, slovenly appearance of volumes ever at hand for a moments pastime. The little canarys cage, hanging over the flowerpots completed the idyl framed by the four walls of a small house, placed not just in the most arcadian regions appended to thriving Liverpool.

The bird sang merrily, and with such violent agitation as if he would burst the wires of his prison and surely, if his soul was in his song, he overcame them pretty effectually. No one was in the room. Was the canary deep in the mysteries of the family, did he think the morning auspicious perhaps for a meeting of love the deserted place, the time of spring, on which he looked out from the bright pane of glass? Birds have but little else to think about, than love, I fancy. Did the canary know of anything that would make such a meeting desirable? He had heard Richard Lansdales step before the door. For whom of the two girls, let us put the case might the canary prefer he should come? To woo for Ethel or for Maud?

For Ethel, would the warbler vote. I know it. He loves her best and would wish it to her to be loved best by all. He would not argue about anybodys favouring Maud. That child amuses herself enough from morn to night, without having need of that bearer of happiness credentials, a wooer. She is far too flighty, too intractable, tho unwomanly to enter into canarys conceptions of settling down in a wellkept household with another canary-bird and neatly trimmed flowers, of course, like a married

dame. His loud song, being pitched almost to a scream, seems now to me to shriek out persistently, over and over again, with a little embellishing melody: "For Ethel, for Ethel, for Ethel!"

But it is Richard and Maud, who presently enter unexpectedly, though the sight seems not to put out the songster. Richard had come upon the girl unawares, in the passage, and had asked her first after Mrs. Graham, and secondly, after her sister. As if he had not taken previous steps to know that Mrs. Graham had gone marketing, and stood in a listening attitude in the doorway, when the little maid-of-all work had admitted him. "Ethel is up stairs, reading to Mrs Belfast, who is keeping her bed to-day" was the information he received. "I will call her." "No, come a moment with me into the parlour, Maud please."

Having entered the parlour accordingly, Miss Maud turned upon him: "Well, Mr. Truant, you have been making a holiday for yourself, at Mr. Rosens? That's volunteer-fashion, I daresay."

"I have letters to write at home."

"And the while you come here."

"I am going to tell my father how I am progressing at Mr. Rosens. That takes time and trouble with me, for I never could compose a letter, not the simplest."

"You only say that to hear a gainsay, Mr. Lansdale. If you have come here for advice, mayhap, go and write to your papa how you are getting on at George Rosens cotton merchant, I tell you."

"I should like to write to him something else too, by and by" mused Richard, playing absently with his watchchain.

"No one can know about all that better than yourself."

He suddenly bent his full gaze upon her. "There is a thing I could write, that would please him beyond anything, please everybody, I venture to say, if you will say so."

"But I won't, before. I know what it is."

„Of course. Maud, would you think it precipitate if I had already dreamt of marriage and thought of speaking about it to somebody I love?"

„Not more precipitate than most things that are done. One can never know if they are well thus or would have turned out better a little else."

Oh how prudent she looked, when she gave that answer, how circumspect, how guarded, how wise!

„A young man in my position needs not to let himself be weighed down with tender fears and cares before he takes courage to make out his right to happiness in the hoped for reciprocity of affection. Maud, my dearest, we never were in the habit of much circumlocution in our intercourse, our felicitous, brigthening, incomparable intercourse. Maud, can we bind it firmer yet against fortune and separation, for ever and aye will you be my glad and darling wife?"

„Richard!" really shrieked out Maud, and with that one word, with anything but love and joy in it, she threw herself into an arm chair, turning her back upon him and laying her face against the cushions behind.

Richard stood abashed, he did not understand the scene. But Maud soon turned her head round again, her brow contracted and her mouth twitching, while her left hand nervously plucked at the folds of her garment! „Such a shock as you have given me! How could you, oh, you miserable, disgusting man!"

„What does this mean?" Richard asked, crossly now.

„How could you offer that to me!"

„Is there anything to prohibit it?" Never was a man brought down with more surprise from the height of assurance. He had confidently counted on holding his bride elect in his arms by the second, which now ticked out on the mantelshelf. Maud would not draw out the interview of this particular species with the sometimes

occurring simpering and affectation, he could well foresee, knowing her nature, as little given to sentimentality as to the constraint of truth. He could scarcely think of anything less than a previous secret marriage or some reason for heroic self sacrifice to induce a girl to disregard his addresses. These two possibilities were not in his mind at this very moment, for he was completely bewildered, to say the truth, but they would have been if he had argued at all.

“Go away at once, sir, and behave as if you had never said such a thing!”

“You are perhaps able to imagine, Maud, that I have not come here to be thus cursorily treated. Nor are the antecedents of our association such as to make me view this proposal in the light of a rash or unauthorized attempt. I might have been led to expect rather a favourable answer from you. Never have you restricted my confidence, never shown that our customary intimacy disagreed with your inclinations, never retired before my demonstrated preference for you.”

There was passion in Maud's face, the passion of rage — just pretty in her as in Moores young Nourmahal. It was too much for her. „Your demonstrated preference for me, when nobody has ever hinted at anything but your marrying Ethel! When I have known it since I learned my A. B. C., that you and sister were to be a pair. I should pay attention to your insinuations and distinctions, I should conceive the remotest idea of your ever, ever coming to me!” If she had been an oriental beauty she would have torn her hair.

Richard felt his understanding illumined by a bonfire. Fair would be victim on the altar of sisterly love! „Maud, my own, I would never have divined that preconception of yours. I comprehend now the surprise I have caused you. Unselfish darling as you are, your regards

were only on your sisters prospects and never consulted over your own. I must leave you time then perhaps, when I implore your consideration of my wishes."

He had entered a false track though. Maud rose from her chair with such a decided movement that it was almost a stamp and said, confronting him: „Mr. Lansdale, don't give me time, nor words, nor anything. Sooner than marry you I would — I don't know what I would do, for I literally hate you for this mistake. And besides there is but one man in the world whom I love so much, that I would never have opinion enough of another man to marry him.”

„Ah, who is that?” asked Richard hastily, without speculating whether he would be as unreservedly answered or not.

„That is my uncle Arthur”, said Maud.

„Are you perhaps going to marry him?” observed Richard with the most imperceptible approach to a sneer.

„Do you think one must needs marry every man one likes?” retorted Maud.

„Then I must consider myself absolutely and definitely rejected?” Mr. Lansdale said to the lady of his choice, as they both were approaching the door.

„Without the faintest question left. I hope I have not hurt you, Mr. Lansdale I did not want to hurt you. Don't tarry any longer, pray, and never say a word about it, Richard. Promise me never to say a word about it, that this interview may be as good as undone, for kindness' sake.

With that promise he parted from the girl. He was in the sunlight again and it dazzled him, he turned round the corner and was glad to be out of sight of Mrs. Grahams windows. He was not in the lachrymose state of a dejected lover, he was in the highest degree sulky and disenchanted of Maud and angry with her. He had given that promise of discretion with an amiable grace, like a concession, yet I would defy anybody to have presented him-

self as his confidant in his illsuccess, without it. He would make a point of showing himself uninfluenced by their eventful conference towards Maud, as a man with a sense of highmindedness and loftiness over disappointment, yet the young lady had unquestionably done the very thing to lower herself in his esteem. She did not appreciate him as he ought to be appreciated by people sager than that baby; he saw it was not a sacrifice she made. But Ethel loved him! In that promise it lay, that this unlucky interlude might not trouble the course of former expectations. What had sometimes astonished him in Ethel, the scantiness of praise, the measurement of admiration, even to a remark of disapproval, was love — the love shy to own its idolatry. Maud sank suddenly down from the throne of his manly affections, to become a child, a silly compound of thoughtless sayings and senseless doings Ethel rose up like an apparition called forth by the spell-word of Mauds insinuation that she was the woman who loved him, — enough in that one quality to gain the highest right among women, though she had hitherto proved no title of harmony or peculiarity to attract him. This was much to think of in the first hour after Mauds refusal of his suit, yet his angered mind at once set to work to derogue the character of his first love and grasp at the indemnification curiously originating out of it.

Thus Ethel loves Richard Lansdale! Thus it is taken for granted already in the family that she is to become his bride. For long years the supposition has ripened and matured in the heart of that circle, and has grown like the knowledges of nature in the soul of the elder sister. She has taken leave of Coketown, a child yet, as Richard Lansdales silent betrothed, she has greeted him again in Liverpool in the continuation of that youthful faith, and never swerving from that deeprooted persuasion, she stands now beyond the years of evolutionary changes, for the life

of this earth the woman who loves Richard Lansdale. How it took root, this fact, if it blossomed out of words whispered between mothers, or the sly remark of strangers, beholding the two children side by side in the pretty proportion of their ages and their light and dark beauty, their innate grace, or if Ethels nature enshrined by fate the great trial of love towards a marked personage, all this is enshrouded in a long lapse of scarcely halfremembered years. But on what terms she loves him now, with her full mind and reason, is clear to herself. She holds him to be perfect as far as man is capable of gaining perfection. Hers is not a childish love of his beauty, his manners, his affable words — her love is belief in a deep inward elevation of his being, in the purity of his sentiments, the greatness of his aspirations, well founded on the profession of his aims and many evidences of his real goodnature. Her faith in him does not rest on his single acts, but must rather be supported by every one of these acts fitting into the image she raised of Richard Lansdale in her breast. And she disclaims having set up an ideal for him to reach! Well, every true womans work is this, I imagine, were she ever so little idealistic, to perfect the object of her thoughts, whereever reality forbears harshly to interfere. The friends in our heart may often not be entirely adapted in every trait to their living originals, and at times we may become advertent of our error; may it be small then and not shake the posts of our edifice. Perhaps Richard is all or nearly all that Ethels love has made him, and his saddest fault only to be too conscious of it. He is not a pretender in the humanity he desires to represent, he thinks too well of himself to stoop to intentional dishonesty, his accomplishments, which complete the whole for Miss Grahams admiration, are proved. If you could lay any detected fault of his before her, she would not be disturbed by this evidence of the common

lot of man or would proudly dispose of it with a serviceable excuse, but the great traits of her noble ideal would remain unblighted. Let Richard himself never gainsay it, though this secret history of the love that follows him be a sealed book to him for an indefinable period, as it lies yet to day, unattained by his musings — he is young still, — oh the hope in being young!

Maud sits in the armchair in Mrs. Grahams parlour, where she had listened to Mr. Lansdales overtures, and wept as if her heart would break. How pure and clear must have been the sky, where such a mornings cloud produced such an unwonted shower of tears! How unfailingly must the young sister have trusted in the consummation of Ethels wishes, that this contradiction she experienced, wrings from her that anguish of disenchantment. Nay, more, the firm unwavering conviction of the decree of mutual love in Ethel I discover here too, governing the view Maud takes of the case. The tender hope of their mother joins itself to the press of emotions against the childs heart — a castle built in air since several lustrums fell shattered to her feet. May Richard take the cue and rebuild it in a night, so that nobody be the wiser for it; to the initiated the temple is for ever profaned. The tie woven by affectionate dreams between Ethel and Richard from very infancy was broken by his choice of to day, showing him to be entirely neutral of that self-sufficient convention. Richard had never been a dogmatist of the persuasion, that was a whispering undercurrent of the familys intimate life. The cloud that shaded the valley of their peace, ever present in the elder daughters character, it may break into rain, or flash into lightning, — its dissolution is death.

Maud wept too long. When Ethel entered by accident about a half hour later, the large drops were hastily brushed

away, but the red stains were undeniable. Ethel's amazement proved how rare the tears were on that face.

„Maud! you have been crying?!"

„A little, sis, don't mind it. It's nothing."

„Maud, what does this mean? What reason can you have for crying, tell me, dear?" Sister had gone up to her and looked in her face in a very motherly, protecting fashion. But Maud was not in want of this.

„Ethel, my love, don't make an alarm about it, don't, please. I got into the humour and cried a little. I was a fool; embrace me, dear, for a little goose and pardon me."

„You have not wept a little, but much," now resumed Miss Graham in a severer tone. „You are not in the habit of crying and must have had a reason for it. Won't you tell it?"

„Indeed it was nothing, sister."

„Well, when you begin to give me an answer like, nothing', child, I have to question you no more." Ethel sternly drew herself up. „I am not accustomed to this from you, but you may please yourself." The trial of meeting Ethel in the matter was eventually concluded, for Maud well knew from experience in equal cases of dissatisfaction or offence taken, that her sister would mark the incident with her disapproval by a stiff silence and a haughty renouncement of interest in it. Mrs. Graham, observing the subsequent coldness in Ethel's demeanour, seldom puzzled herself about the probable cause, leaving the girls to arrange their own differences. Nor did she this time, when she returned home, though her eldest had fallen into a state of obvious rigidity. But Maud had no peace of mind before she had „made it up" with sister, who was rather a difficult subject on such occasions. Late in the afternoon, being alone with her together, she approached the offended dignity, threw her arms around Miss Graham and said: „Now don't be cross with me,

Ethel dear. Into what a mess I brought myself with a nonsense"

"How so? Nothing has happened since this morning, when you got into the crying humour, and no one has drawn you to account for that."

"But you have quarrelled with me."

"I don't like mysteries. I see no motive for them in this house. That made me a little angry. What do you want to say now, Maud?"

"Only that you shall leave off being angry."

"Well, Maud, at least, when you want to keep a thing to yourself, don't say that it is nothing, when you are asked, but that you won't speak about it."

"One way or the other you are angry still, Ethel," said Maud, tightening her face as if she would like to cry again. Her sister remarked it with an impatient gesture. Before her adding any words to it, Allan entered.

"What is the matter now with you two?" he asked at once, indicative of his sometimes falling in upon a little scene of disagreement.

Maud declared that she had been foolish and Ethel would n't forgive it, Ethel stated the particulars and gave evidence that she had never seen "the child" so unaccountable before.

"Ethel is not just," Maud complained, "for a fullgrown person should not be obliged to account for every small doing, that strikes another's notice."

"Speaking thus clearly, you argue right," Miss Graham gave her sentence. "I like confidence as I don't fancy secretmongers, brother, that's the beginning of the question, but if she is not now only capricious I have nothing to say to her."

"And I should say it is caprice," opined Allan. "Now don't let us injure our temper with the question, sister, leave Maud to dispose of it herself and be kind."

Soon after that the elder sister left the room to seek her mother. Maud, staying alone with her brother, instantly turned to him: „To you I will give the reason of all the trouble, Allan —”

„Oh no need,” quickly interposed the young man, „what you cannot communicate to Ethel I have no necessity to be acquainted with either.”

„Leave it then,” replied Maud, tartly, feeling herself rather too superciliously treated.

Chapter IV.

The Dinner-Party.

In the month of June Mr. Landsdale senior came through L'pool on his way to the London Exhibition. He was accompanied by his wife, his youngest daughter and his sister-in-law. The whole party, bent on seeing the new baby and enjoying the vincutures of friendship that bound them to the town, made some stay at Gwendolines. In London another daughter expected them, married to a gentleman of more brilliant position than Lloyd Graham. Scarcely however could they anticipate more pleasure from their reception in the metropolis, than that detaining them here with cordial endeavour.

Mr. Rosen gave a grand dinner in honour of these guests. Mrs. Osborne was delighted with the latter from that reason, if from no other. The saloons of the Princes Park mansion were put into a glitter of light, silver and crystalware, flowers and servant elegance. Reports from champaigncorks resounded through the feast, much clatter and more talk, till the wine remains sole lord of the table and the gentler part of society inevitably takes its flight. This one was yet large enough to fill the drawing room

with a radiant throng, that had its several conversations on every side of the spacious room, and its most sympathetic members attracted towards each other into groups. But O wonder, we make not the acquaintance of one we should deem a principal lady of this social array, for Mrs. Lansdale has been elaborately excused from the party with a headache or some such useful disorder, the Lloyd Grahams also abstaining from joining the invitation on the ground of bearing her company. Miss Ansted, the sister-in-law and Anne, Richards sister, are there, and it being such a grand friendly gathering, even Mrs. Robert Graham has been prevailed upon to come out of her retirement in her black silk dress and a cap tastefully trimmed by Ethel's hand. Her daughters and Allan, like Richard one of the first to join the ladies in the drawing room, formed a group with Winifred, Anne Lansdale and some other young misses of apparently much pretension, while Richard himself stood behind Miss Georgiana's chair. Mrs. Graham and Mrs. Osborne on the sofa, the bevy of maidens there, Georgiana, who likes to entertain herself with gentlemen, with young Lansdale at her elbow, — the ingredients of that company have settled well, I should say. Still, when are hearts, agitated in the least degree by the sorry passion abstracting the name of love, satisfied, I ask? But Ethel is at ease, very much so, in the unwonted stateliness of her surroundings, in the crowding opportunities for the conception of jealous disquietude. In her fortuned belief in the predestination of her attachment she rests tranquil and superior to the petty fluctuations in the minds of ordinary lovesick beings. With her proud and firm trust she towers in that saloon, the spirit of a selfcrowned queen of her fate. Maud with her heart free, has no fears of loss and the joys of winning. No one equals in yonder room the two Graham girls.

Ah, but I fancy that there is some stirring in Winifred

Rosens breast, and I couple it involuntarily with the gallant preserver of her father. Her beautiful and absorbing affection has been her father hitherto and how easily may it pass over to the form linked to it by such a moment, it being moreover fascinating and acceptable enough to the regard.

Winifred was a slender, girlish figure, very elegant, very delicate of feature, very graceful in every gesture. She was as fair to look at as some gardenflower swaying on its stem, used to care, to attention and admiration. Allan looked at her in that way. He gazed as with the eye of an artist, who understanding the natural perfection of an object, follows it with the love of this though knowing to have no practical application for it. Mr. Bickering had probably uttered the suggestion „Sixteen?” the other day only to imply a taunt at Winifreds minute fairness, yet she was selfpossessed enough to be twenty. When Richard Lansdale occasionally played the courteous towards her one might remark, that they looked extremely well together, though he was so tall in comparison to her. But discreet is the design in those captivating violetblue eyes, to whom Miss Rosen lifts her own and his smile is certainly not her monopoly.

Young Richard was giving much of his confidence to the superb Georgiana, in this after-dinner hour. He was speaking of his mother, having heard many regrets expressed at her non-appearance. „As I told Mr. Rosen already”, he said, quite sub rosa, „she could not appear here, nor anywhere than in the most intimate circles. It is my fathers pleasure to give himself a lot of trouble to account verisimilarly for her retirement, so as to uphold the fiction of casualty in every repeated case. In our town it has come to be a public secret, that Mrs. Lansdales mind is not equal to the exertion of social duties. Still my father lives in the fond belief, I doubt not, that

he deceives society. He is an original old gentleman. I would bear the lot elsewhere than by causing people to whisper about a skeleton in our cupboard. When somebody has the misfortune to become subjected to an affection of the brain, I would no more be ashamed to say so, than you, Miss Osborne, would be to own a migraine."

"Quite right. Besides, within society things cannot be kept secret."

"Oh, but not putting the case thus — I seek for the principle: why should it be kept secret, I dispute. If my father puts it as a dishonour to have lost ones wits, I would only think myself maintaining honour with not trying to delude people about the subject. I feel strongly on that point, Miss Osborne, I do, and I uphold my view on any occasion. There my father and I are at variance. We must be at variance on many points, because his opinions mostly were fresh half a century ago. Half a century makes a difference, you will admit."

"Such an elder character among the modern ones is delightful, Mr. Lansdale. You will make me quite an enthusiast about your father. You hinted at superstitious persuasions superstition is fast diminishing now a days. I almost love innocent superstition."

"I deplore it in so clearheaded a man like my father. It looks awkward upon occasions. But I can't turn his convictions."

"Oh you must not, indeed. This is all very amiable in a gentleman of his age. At his period of life it is neither mans nor womans grace to covet fashion, the dignity of age rises above it."

"The dignity of age, Miss Osborne, is meant to imply wisdom, I suppose. Is there a merit in the simple adding together of years? No, it should consist in the gathering of experience. To be consequential in our attitude we must be less lenient to error in age or not bow to it in hollow respect."

„Mr. Lansdale, you are not calling a child's respect to a parent hollow!"

„I am speaking solely about the relative position of youth and age in general cases. I beg leave to be always considered as treating generalities, pronouncing my special interest in the constituents of our human community. The rules of society should be revised, as the laws of the country. We are living on statutes to be brooding on reform. Our urbane laws lack the thoroughness that would make them intransient. Is there any sense in saying pleasing things in the name of politeness, when one recognizes how they should be distrusted for their latter capacity? Is there reason to ignore friends inuendoes, when we comprehend them excellently, to thwart maliciously the natural impulses ever and anon peeping out of etiquette, which are thwarted to our grief reciprocally in ourselves? I plead for openness."

„Winifred, my dear," exclaimed Miss Osborne, „do come here to listen to Mr. Lansdale on the reform of manners. This is a theme which should comprehend a greater auditory than myself. I can't interrupt mamma, who is earnestly occupied with Mrs. Graham, but I think ourselves ought to have the generosity to take note of it. Mr. Lansdale will not give us a good word any more, my dear, for fear of our looking through his polite dissimulations. He advocates the politeness of truth."

„The truthfulness of my compliments to you, ladies, would better sustain its worth in your appreciation when compliments were always truthful," said Richard bowing.

„Youth and truth is Mr. Lansdale's motto," observed Georgiana

Winifred looked inquiringly into the handsome blue eyes, „Very well for a motto which is of nature concise" he said. „Youth is older than age, for it belongs with greater strength to an everadvancing time. Do you not feel the

pride of youth Miss Rosen, possessed of all the newest and therefore best things of earth?"

"Miss Rosen feels no pride but the grand one to be George Rosens daughter," pronounced Miss Osborne.

"It is my first pride at least, and could not be superseded but by the idea of my being a daughter entirely worthy of him," responded Winifred. "If you ask me about the newest and best things, I have them all from my father, Mr. Lansdale."

"I believe you did not understand me aright. The sense was abstractedly psychological. I was expounding on principles, conceptions, progress but I hear the gentlemen approaching. Please let us drop ages and periods of life on my fathers entrance. He has an antipathy to be regarded from the point of his period in life. It is the same delicacy, as with my mothers misfortune. I see no virtue in such delicacy, but it is just a social propriety."

"As you mention your mother, Mr. Lansdale, I would express to you how sorry we are of the state of her health, that retains her in seclusion, but I need not say how we shall honour your fathers reserve on the subject?" said Winifred, looking a little surprised perhaps to find Georgiana also a confidante in it. "This is more than social propriety, this is a matter of feeling," she added, rather like an admonition to the conversational Miss Osborne.

"Pray what feeling seals your tongue, when you advert to my mothers state of health?" asked Richard. "That is the charm of womans touch, that with them everything is feeling. There I do not understand you, we men are so hard, Miss Rosen. For my own part I plead no more reticence for it, than for any complaint."

"It will be feeling in your father too, Mr. Lansdale. In the first instance he will not like to be pitied, as he might be. I myself should hate to be pitied. I suppose I never will be, but I could not bear the thought of it."

„Miss Rosen pitied! You are putting a remote problem, to think of that being brought about”

„Problems are somewhat to your taste however;” observed Georgiana. „We may pass over this as too unnecessary, you allow” she smiled, with a look on the bright, glowing figure, whose eyes did not fail to welcome her fathers entrance into the room.

Mr. Lansdale senior was not a man to remain quite unnoticed where he bestowed his presence. He was as much in movement personally as his restless, unremittingly attentive brown eyes.

Lightening from right to left and up and down, his glances seemed on everlasting business alert, as if even that company could give opportunity for its exertion. He was of small stature with a loose style in his attire, as if he cared not to give many minutes to toilette, and very quick in word and mien. A very different feature of the cotton market from Mr. Rosen. — Fortunately, neither young Bickering nor a brother of his were of this nights party. It was casually mentioned among the habitués of Mr. Rosens entertainments, that the two Bickerings had gone to London and were moreover contemplating a continental tour.

„Are you not going to send your son on the continental tour yet?” Mrs. Osborne inquired of Mr. Lansdale.

„No” he replied with emphasis, making a decisive stop at the curt rejoinder. „I would send nobody to the continent” he then proceeded rapidly, knitting his brows unconsciously into two deep wrinkles over his protruding nose. „It's nothing good that people learn on the continent.”

„Oh father, you don't know the extent of advantages that comes over from the continent. Fancy us isolated with no Europe about us and you would speak elsewaise.”

„You think that you alone are watching the barter between Great Britain and the other countries. I am there too,

Richard. I am no exclusionist, I don't say that there's no good coming from the continent, on my faith, we stand enough in need of it but that an Englishman returns nothing the better from an excursion abroad. He goes to Paris, to German watering places, to Italian cities, sees all the varnish, thinks he has widened his knowledge of life and brings his rubbish to the home, which alone shows him the core of things. One may get wealthy and wise in his own country; I have tried that. I never have been on the water in my life, and as to putting my foot on any of those puffing, steaming vessels of these days, pshaw, there's enough giddiness in their bustle, I say, to make all the passengers insolvent."

"Oh, Mr. Lansdale," cried Mrs. Osborne, "are you not then also an enemy of railways? They affect the head much more directly and people prophecy that the coming generation will have all its senses shattered."

"I would never go in an express, madam. A slow train I find going rather smoothly and taking it easy at the stations and moderating the use of it to extraordinary occasions, I consider my good sense equal to it. The haste and hurry is the harm of the thing, where it exhausts the nerves. Keep your thoughts quiet on any occasion of turmoil and you rest safe from the surrounding excitement. With an exertion of will it can be done, when one is forced to join in a general rush."

"One can arrive somewhere, with bags and trunks, behold a thousand people hurrying hither and thither with luggage, the engine whistling to be off and trains on several rails, with passengers filling the carriages, and never fear a mistake with the baggage, nor apprehend the movement of the engine or the forfeit of the best seat! Mr. Lansdale, you must be superhuman to act upon that maxim."

"One can keep clearminded. One can consider the stress of the time as an unavoidable pressure on our

energies, if we want to keep abreast with fellowmen, and with the right perception be among the masters of the position. The position must never master us. The rush is not only threatening in a railway station, I wouldn't let my hair turn grey on account of that, but I feel it coming upon me in business, in my counting house. There it seeks me without leaving it to my discretion to evade it. The best I can do is not to go ahead of others and thereby incite the rest to go faster. There is a deeper and higher art in the handling of money than many have taken cognizance of yet."

"We have brought a question from the board down-stairs for the arbitration of the ladies," here interposed Mr. Rosen. "Our friend Mr Lansdale having the gallantry to propose a toast on the commerce of Liverpool, I took leave to drain another cup especially to its best agents, peace and friendly exchange. Drifting from that cause into a discussion on the factors of the traffic of nations we arrived at the prosaic theme of gold, with many a distinction of view and opinion about the subject in the company. And in a controverse just on the verge of being too serious for a dinner-table, Mr. Lansdale raised his glass and said: "I in the name of Mammon pledge you this cup!"

"I was upholding Mammon against ignominious estimation," explained Mr. Lansdale.

"Now we counted members in our circle who would not support the toast Dr. Deans theology revolted against the dead idol, the poetical genius of the round rebelled, and we suspected the departed ladies' influence as adverse too. There did not fail those who responded to the cup, but to insure general satisfaction, I deferred the cause to the court of appeal in the drawing room. I lay down the plea before your enlightened scrutiny: is it inadmissibly profane to toast the god of coin?"

Most of the gentle council indignantly seconded the rejection, using the opportunity to feel becomingly astonished, outraged and tickled by the oddity of the old gentlemans motion. Ethel Graham gave her comment: „A jesting toast is a moments whim. I think, with as much right within five minutes, as it has no right over the longer hours.”

„It was not a jest, my dear Miss Graham,” contended the Coketown manufacturer. „As soon as we do not toast living persons, we toast personifications, and Mammon is about the most comprehensive personification I know of, on my word. It governs the entire territory of civilisation, it is animated with the thoughts and wishes of almost all the world.”

„Mr. Lansdale is in the right,” interposed Richards aunt, „money may well be said to constitute the arbiter of life. On the proportion of fortune depends the course of our material and moral progress, at the close of life every human being may point back over the way he has come to money and say: „This has brought me thus.”

„But this is no motive for celebrating money. People come best to the close of life without the thought of it,” said Allan.

„No, no,” cried Mr. Lansdale, „the depreciation of money is affectation in some people and in others it is misvaluation of its importance. Gold is the means, the key to the wellbeing of man, to the attainment of every end and aim, which we may set ourselves.”

„It is not the key to hearts and the means to the real spirit of ethic attainment.”

„Of course one thing always requires another to act upon. You must have steam for the engine and engines for the steam. The combination of powers. But money is a power, sir, and when one has earned it all by ones own assiduity one even comes to love it a little, for its own sake.”

„Oh father, what an idea you are giving the company!

I despise money for a low varlet of humanity, destined to do the sisyphos work while we are striving for paradise."

"You would not despise it, my son, if you had seen more of its want. You speak without understanding. With all it has done for you, you should not despise it. If you carry your head so high, its coin that placed it in its present state."

A frown spread over Ethels face as she listened to this last dissertation and Richards gaze was watching it. He was watching Miss Graham often now, maybe with a deeper interest than ever the observation of Maud had called for, as her attracting qualities lay in the profundities of her but halfdivined soul. The young man bent in an aside to the lady: „I hope that my father is not too fast in the meshes of golden illusion as he makes believe. My fathers ideas are not able to detach themselves from the association with money. It is growing upon him yet, it seems, and drags his fine character down with the weight of gold."

„When conversation enters such a channel it is sickening" replied Ethel. „For the moment it takes all grace off the world. To give a cold dead medium ascendency over the will and sentimement of life. It is distorting the image of your father now, whom we know better from the old days of Coketown."

„You do not know him better than you see him now, for having known him in years that are past."

The war was waging still in the saloon. „The state of fortune influencing temper and pursuits, has the chief hand in moulding our character," said Miss Ansted. „According to our dominion over or drudgery under the precious metal we dedicate ourselves to moral courses, our freedom of humour and feeling cannot declare its independence of it. Financial science may link itself to the study of humanists."

„Yes,” approved Mr. Lansdale, „the right distribution of property should be the states wisdom of alchymy. It would prove efficacious against social ills, against popular grievances, for the constitution of national health. The poverty that believes itself wronged, the wealth that falls into all the mischief of useless idleness, the great enterprises that need a large concentration of riches over the level of common capacity, these are the objects of debate for a man who seeks the benefit of his country and his fellow beings. Every trader who pays his clerks, every manufacturer who determines the wages of his instruments has part in the government of this problem. I try to relieve penury, I must reckon well to reserve the bulk of my sums for the demands and hopes of industry, I seem to withhold, while I am only sparing the sources to have them strengthened with fresh supplies.”

„For example” said Mr. Rosen, „is it the height of charity to deny oneself every expense, not to detract more than necessary from the donations to the poor? A lady of sentiment, the younger Miss Graham, has put the case — but many a tradesman would not thank us for it. The common traffic would stagnate. Yet it is a sore puzzle to eat a dainty oyster for the incitement of appetite with a relishing conscience, while our neighbour has not the crust for the hunger of himself and his family.”

„Nothing is lost, however prodigally spent; we may bide our patience with anybody short of a miser.”

„It is my maxim too to spend” remarked Richard.

„Prodigality I hold to be as deteriorating to a satisfactory order of things as avarice” Mrs. Graham put in „There is no sufferance for extremes, but the recommendableness of the medium.”

„I suppose the counterbalance of existing conditions is just best as it is,” Allan followed up Mr. Rosens reflection.

„We must take things as they come, do what offers to us and trust that the whole best arranges itself.”

„I consider that a lazy trust,” murmured Richard.

„I would seek happiness very far away from money and outward honours” concluded Allan, „and if in that position I must still remain in relation with Mammon for a humanist critic, I am certainly not tempted to confound it tenderly with that which it brings about.”

After this lengthened disquisition upon a theme which Mr. Rosen did not regard as quite in accordance with the recreative purposes of evening discourse, the zealous hosts led attention to music, albums and the billiard room.

Winifred, turning over the leaves of some universal landscap views with Ethel Graham, said: „I have been to Dresden with papa as a child. It is his birthplace and we went to visit papas family.”

„A lovely city, I have heard,” said Richard behind her chair, „and I will see it yet for all that my father says. Dresden, Paris, Vienna, Rome, Venice. My heart bounds at the names. Beauty, the great and changeful panorama of metropolitan life, the springtides of civilized feeling, where one may drink in the knowledge of all things humane. You love voyages, I am sure, Miss Rosen.”

„It is the height of pleasure, making them with papa, who has seen a deal of the world, european and ultramarine. I know papa will take me on more tours yet and I am happy in the thought.”

„You travel for beauty's sake, Miss Rosen. Ladies go in quest of beauty; I would journey for the study of the dark sides as well.”

„You should not always go with the eye of a student, Mr Lansdale,” observed Ethel, „you should sometimes allow for free enjoyment”

„I cannot” replied the young philosopher with a very selfpleased ring in his voice — so satisfied never to be

capable of disengaging himself from his noble pursuits — „I cannot more help gathering observations suiting my ideal aims, than girls can deny themselves to cull the flower by the wayside.”

„You would enjoy a trip across the Channel too, Miss Graham?” inquired Winifred. „You have felt the desire?”

„According to circumstances I would fancy it,” Miss Graham discreetly returned.

„You cannot but be charmed by the idea of voyage!”

„I never experienced an especial longing for it, nor would I wish it at all events, but only on the conjunction of agreeable accompaniment and fascinating associations with the places to be visited.”

„Sister is too wise to long for an object which she is not likely to attain,” Maud interposed.

„It is not so unlikely that she will get the opportunity of farther journeys yet one day,” Richard returned.

„I would like to see London, but I have not the faintest curiosity about Paris,” Ethel defined her opinion.

„If you could make acquaintance of both —”

„No, not Paris I have conceived it too much as trivial and frivolous. The English capital has dignity. Oh, I wish to know London!”

„Because you are going to visit it this summer, sis.”

„You really wish to know London!”

„It is a historical city. And my father is living there, it would always interest me. London belongs to the associations of all Englishpeople.”

„Would you like to see Dresden?” Winifred threw out, with the rudiments of a scheme springing up in her secret mind, that the opportunity might be managed for Miss Graham to accompany them on one of the excursions in prospect.

„Oh yes,” replied Ethel without particular enthusiasm and it set Richard musing that perhaps she would like it with him.

Then they talked about home amusements, about the opera, the newest apparitions in literature, the balls in the townhall, the summertrips to Wales and the north. It had been her fathers pleasure to give Winifred an early taste of the refined enjoyments of life, — she was passionate on the opera, ardent in the praise of renowned places of resort. She was just stepping on the threshold of the saloons of fashion and elegance, not with such overwrought excitement as to make a reaction^{*} in her appreciation of their charms probable. Allan Graham listened to the discourse and somehow it smote him disagreeably how Miss Rosen delighted in all the fascinations, which lie especially in the reach of fortune. What a sense she had of the beauty of luxury, without the inferior considerations of vanity, only with an aesthetic love of it, how little sense she had of the difficulty to indulge them so freely in other positions of life. The delicate choice of her attire was not vanity, it was a graceful comprehension of tasteful adaptness, the lore of the stage was a cherished melody of her days, costly diversions were her idea of the seasons, unconsciousness of the obligation of denial characterized her view of life.

How exultingly Winifred observed herself coinciding with Richard Lansdale in many matters of elegant taste that evening, how they compared notes about famous singers, celebrated artists, fashionable authors. Miss Rosen liked to have the first glimpse of celebrities always, she liked when her father could draw them into their domestic circle. She grew eloquent with Richards aunt, Helen Ansted, on the sublime scenery of Wales, the representation of Eden to the Lansdale family. Miss Ansted talked of everything that was approved for stylish like a connoisseur, though she had very little opportunity to exercise her fashionable inclinations in her brother in laws home. What the papers take it upon themselves to communicate of

high society, she had studied, she was more conversant with the arrangements of the Queens household than with those of her neighbours in Coketown. She had read every book that was recommended, and from Iceland to Fireland she had the right interest and instruction that might be expected from the lady of the day. When she had heard Grisi or how Jenny Lind might puzzle a scrutinizing listener, but it appeared that she had done so. Miss Ansted was the perfection of a lady, and yet not all fashion, for nature held its sway unsubdued in an absorbing affection for her nephew Richard, who complimentally acknowledged that he owned the chief part of his education to her.

The animation of the company felt still in the midst of its efforts, when Mr. Lansdale induced his party to rise, pleading his customary hours for taking an early departure. Mrs. Graham with her children widened this break-up, inclining neither to late hours out of home. The happy late hours of eleven or twelve, forty years ago! The dinners at five, the tea guests at seven! Incomparable wisdom of our ancestors, who held the day for waking and the night for sleeping! The mornings were fresher at that time and the summers not so full of faded flowers.

Winifred looked genuinely sorry when Mr. Lansdale enforced his intention against the polite objections of his host. Miss Ansted said to her nephew: "You will take leave to remain yet half an hour longer, I suppose —" and she smiled so pleasantly, and her eyes met Winifreds by accident. Miss Rosen looked much gayer again. Richard was very attentive on the departure of the Graham ladies and whispered in Ethels ear: "They seem to expect it of me, so I shall suffer myself to be left behind." — And it being expected of him, he was obliged to do it, and an hour later Miss Rosen had an unfounded impression that he was loth to leave even then.

Still in the month of June, Mr. Lansdale rolled away

in a leisurely train with wife, daughter and sister in law, london-wards bound. Miss Ansted would have been much gratified by young Richards accompaniment on that tour, but unfortunately that gentleman was so vastly busy at the time, that he could do nothing but promise his best exertions to follow them in a fortnight or so. Ah, she felt, that she had taken things too easy, when she asked the commercial volunteer inconsiderately to step under her banners. Those were measured hours, which young Lansdale could spare from his duties in Liverpool.

Chapter V.

Happiness.

There was joy in the house of Mrs. Robert Graham — such joy as there never has been and never will be again. It smiles in every heart with a full contentment, it is the fullblown flower of a sweet domestic love. Ethel is engaged to Richard. When the hopes for Maud one day are sealed, or Allan brings home the crown of success, Ethel will not be of the household any more, or something else may fail to the glory of this short and conclusive consummation of a longestablished wish. It is so simple in itself, this fulfilment — there is so little in it, that I can see — but in the Graham circle it was since years past like waiting for the warmbreathed license of spring, which must arrive, yet still holds out. Ethels life had been like March and April hitherto, the virgin coolness and elasticity lay under her foot in vain, with her ardent impatience for the sun of May; she lost many a chance of childish mirth and girlish pleasure in her persistent dream of an elected ones love. She had neglected no duties, she had a heart wide enough to hold more images of affection together

with the chosen attachment of her fate, but her mother and her brother knew as well as Maud, that the springs of her life aimed at this end, curious law of imagination, alone. Ethel had made the event the postulate of her happiness, and scarcely would such another be set up by Allan or Maud, to be watched to grow and so desired to bloom.

If Allan was not entirely content with the suitor, he was unconditionally content with the suit for his favourite sisters sake; the fond mother saw the completion of expectations deferred to this bond realising itself as she had prayed.

But a hallowed sight it was to discover the deep, calm happiness, new in the eye of Richards betrothed. The ineffable satisfaction, when all disquietudes went for ever to rest, when all doubts came to an end, when she could openly demonstrate the impulses of her devoted heart. The ban was broken, the spellword pronounced and all feelings set to work at their natural tasks. Maud skipped about in an exuberance of gladness, and teased her sister to find a vent for her emotions, maintaining that she detected a thousand inconveniences in Ethels compact with Mr. Lansdale as she introduced her denomination of the great event. It might have been observed, that since her last mysterious crying scene Maud had softly substituted the formal appellation of Mr. Lansdale for the childish sans façon of 'Richard.' Her friends probably thought that a natural revolution of comprehension was setting in, and the child beginning to be a woman by the gradual operation of years. Maybe that her manners had become a bit more subjugated too since that day but who was tracing these phenomena to a determined date? No one knew that Richard had offended the heart of Maud to a degree, that she could never meet him again as she had done before.

Was the girl ashamed or glad of her part in bringing about the present understanding between Richard and Ethel? I dare say she undervalued her share in the results of her inadvertant divulgation of Miss Grahams affairs. She had opened the heart of her home to young Lansdales insight. And young Lansdale so loved the idea of a passion for his proper person, that this was charm enough to impassion him with the spirit of Anteros. He loved, frankly to speak, Miss Grahams love of himself. As this secret meaning lay in every deed, word, look of Ethel, every deed, word and look of hers was entralling. As Ethels love of him was sentence and judgment on every incomprehensibility, every wonder, every deficiency in her comportment, all verdicts took a rosy hue, into all darkness came a light of the tender cause he honoured. This love of his excellent person by and by introduced him to the being of Miss Graham herself, till he absolutely came to fancy her a little for her own originality too. Her intelligence made her fascinating, her instinctive grace made her a pleasing thing to contemplate as the future lady of his house, there was a beauty of regularity in her, that might satisfy a man of fastidious social criticism. We, who have the survey of the whole, who unerringly discern and anatomize the mechanism of Richards heart, who follow the betraying words he lets fall from end to end, and heap up a convincing mass of evidence by every means, we think ourselves a good deal wiser than Ethel Graham with her blind and stubborn love. Yet do we ever weigh words so rightly in life, do we ever fathom cautiously their innate character, do we ever take advantage of such a combination of opportunities for judging the incitements of feeling in our nearest and dearest? Richard Lansdale with his ambition to please possesses also the instinct of such persons to strike the right chord in the right place; he will involuntarily adapt himself to the sympathies of

his momentary surroundings, he can be trivial, sensitive, wanton, gentle, sceptical, enthusiastic. He is not a liar, a deceiver, because his character, void of firmly conceived principles on many points, easily enters into a passing adaptation; Richard denominates it humouring persons when he suits himself inconscientuously and ambiguously to opinions, which it is his first anxiety and ruling passion to secure in favour of himself. He doubts not ever so faintly, nevertheless, that he holds important principles, that he stands authorized in his position with worthy intent, that he is a noble fellow, in a word, whose few faults one would scarcely like to miss for the sake of a set-off. This is the refined and concealed treachery, that toils not for the daily bread, but for the pastimes of a shallow life.

Can this deception remain undiscovered by the perpetrator himself, and by those, who too indiscriminately rely on it? As yet it is a deep secret, which it needs more than a word, a gesture, to uncover.

When Ethel, busy with her favourite plain needlework was sitting at the window — the needlework beginning by and by to have some reference to a future household — her mother, occupied in like manner, would look up with her comfortable smile and say: „That cupboard, dear, you shall take with you. While I kept it polished and beautiful I always thought it a piece of furniture for your own home some day. I have thought of many things besides, that would be nice for you, but some of them may be out of place or useless in the style of establishment Richard will give you. Maud perhaps will make a plainer marriage and be glad of little knickknacks which for you would be superfluity.”

„Keeping it for Maud it is all right, but whatever Richard may provide, it cannot be superfluity what I bring with me from this dear home, my own mamma. Before the

new things are grown into the new life, this will be what makes the rooms comfortable and homely."

Another time, Mrs. Graham came into the parlour with a piece of embroidery in her hand. It was set in a frame to be hung on the wall and represented a scroll on a background of flowers with a bible inscription upon it, delicately worked in golden hair. „Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

„Look, Ethel, I will give you this on your marriage. It was a wedding present to me, made by my best friend. It shall pass over to my dearest daughter for the joy she has been to me, and the blessed hope of the everwished union with Richard, little Richard of the old days in Coketown. Whenever my eyes fell on this pledge of my youthful age, I thought of you and Richard. And it has really come about now.”

„I never doubted it. I think this has nothing to do with my modesty or presumption; I trusted God had imbued me with this dream, because it was to be.”

„Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” It was my favourite bibiletext and therefore Margaret fell on this idea. You have been my best friend since then, love. When you were quite little yet you followed me every where about the house and took note how I did. You listened so soberly to all my words, that it was a pleasure to tell you things. At that time I was not much in the habit of dedicating myself to homely duties, but I sought out lessons to give you personally and we amused ourselves at your earnest rehearsal of them. Afterwards I could tell you all I have felt and thought, as I could not easily tell it to any but your loving and sensible ear, the little fancies I would not even like to trouble Allan with. O Ethel, I shall miss you sorely, though I am so glad!”

„But I will remain near you, always, I hope. Mamma, is it right that I am so happy to go to him? Is it not

somewhat unnatural this desire that must involve a separation from the life, that you have taken all pains to make elevated and content? That I would choose myself to be ever so slightly withdrawn from you?"

"It is the rule of nature, Ethel dear. The mother wishes to put her child in a care younger and stronger than her own. The daughter must have it in her heart to love another life than the introductory of childhood and youth. O when one only has knowledge of and faith in the guardian, to whom we must transfer our duties to the greatest extent!"

Ah indeed why was Ethel not going to stop with her best friend in existence; why think that she needed another guardian, than her mother had trained her to be of herself? The love that leads to marriage is too often the love of a stranger, whose inmost being is hidden to our penetration. The abysses of soul, the flight of sentiment in our neighbour, come often with a shock and a surprise upon us, contradicting our vaunted sagacity, we may be philanthropist or misanthrope.

When Richard came in at an early hour and Ethel went to meet him at the door, I wondered what might happen yet. How quickly the young man had taken the cue from Maud, how soon had he successfully altered his addresses. For the love of Ethels love! What does Ethel know of him, as she puts her hand on his arm, looks up into that wellcut, smiling face and hears the familiar strain of his light gaiety and his weighty purposes of progress and good? What does Ethel know of him, when he looks and whispers the emotions which he himself devoutly believes to be a firm and mighty love? In the guileless days of childhood probably there was no misleading in the promising and engaging qualities of the wellendowed boy but had the girl taken pains, could she take them sufficiently to learn the result of that promise in riper years? More, has Miss

Graham the moral property of conciliating a faithless phantasm with dawning reality?

In the first days after their pledging of the troth, what happiness pervaded the communion of Richard Lansdale and Ethel Graham! The familiar scene in the parlour seemed so novel, with the new right won to the former intercourse. A high breeding of mind, made the latter full of beautiful subjects, of tender conceits t'-was only a pity, that Richard thought all the time how beautiful and tender they were in their place. The girls blissfulness was too grand to seek utterance in many words, her affianced bridegroom felt the mute spirit that embraced him and yet modestly tasted the sweetness of a noble womans love.

Miss Maud was very painstaking in her way with the unfolding of this wonderful domestic drama. She did not like to enter upon the pair, whenever she believed to see signs of their being in a favourable position for a particularly private conversation. The young lady had been all day at Gwendolines, when on one of these memorable evenings she joined her mother in the parlour, soon after Richards coming in.

„Well ma', has papa answered your letter to-day?” was the first information she asked for.

„Yes, dear, I got a reply this morning.”

„What does he say to the engagement?”

„As little as you can imagine, but that it is all right, in his own words.” Mrs. Graham heaved an almost inaudible sigh; surely there was a painful void of sympathy between the husband, who contented himself with eking out his personal subsistence in the mestropolis and the wife, nobly performing her mothers duties here, while this apparently mutual consent of separation was not stamped with an entire break of their amicable ties. The children, with all the artlessness involved by custom, ever took an uncon-

strained interest in papas letters, never having seen himself since their more tender years in Coketown.

„When I am going to London in these days, I shall hear what Mr. Graham says,” observed Richard. „I shall not await a reply from my own father here, but follow up my letter as soon as it is written. I know though, that he will be overjoyed.”

„Will it be the same with us, Richard dear, as in the case of Lloyd and Gwendoline?”

„Perhaps Mr. Lansdale does not want more connections with us,” Maud felt obliged to propose.

„I should be much mistaken, if my father will not heartily congratulate me and to his honour I refute the case. But not our fathers nor anybodys behaviour can change anything for us, Ethel, my love?” he added in a low voice.

„Oh, I hope there will not come such a cloud on our happiness, as any beings disfavour to it.”

As the bright little group sat with the balmy June air streaming in through the open window, another breath of June came softly in at the door. It followed in the suit of a visitor, who without the ceremony of knocking gently admitted himself to its presence. An elderly man with a youthful face, who bore two indexes to his social significance on the sleeve of his black coat firstly, that he was a clergyman, and secondly, a clergyman with a poor living. There is a charm in such a youthful trait in aged features, that one feels oneself drawn ever and anon to the re-contemplation of the face with its smile and its serene blue eyes. When the unsophisticatedness of childhood thus shines through the intellect of manhood, it blends into a beauty which is impossible to the former state alone and rarely preserved for the latter. Hearts yearn towards that face, and the love with which his sister and her family greet him, may unhesitatingly go out from a strangers soul also to the Rev. Arthur Clare.

He folded his young niece in his arms and imprinted a kiss on her forehead, saying: „Ethel, my child, I wish you joy. Our gladness at the event is the blessing of God, that may evermore rest with you. Richard, dear boy,” extending his hand to the young man, with frank gesture abandoning the priestly solemnity that tinged the fervour of his emotion, „I think you have prepared happiness for yourself and for others. I suppose it has not been concealed from you, how with this alliance you will gratify all those, who have witnessed the long course of friendship between the already united families of Lansdale and Graham.”

„Do you think me worthy of her, Mr. Clare — ah, I may also say uncle Arthur now” murmured Richard in an insinuating tone. „You might have done so all along, my boy, we shall scarcely be much closer friends now than we have been already.”

„But do I deserve Ethel,” pursued the lover, trying to look as if he were not sure of the affirmative.

„I fondly trust that you are worthy of each other, and you may live to be always more so. Love is an ennobling thing in itself and every good promising to the hearts that are full of it.”

„I have to thank the world for much love,” said Richard; „I hope, I have not led too easy a life as yet, and difficulties holding back to be shared by my bride. It sets me thinking of the proverb: „The course of true love does not run smooth.” My life is running so smooth, and my love to Ethel — are you not afraid at the sight, like King Amasis in Mr. Rosens German poem?”

„I am not afraid of anything that shall meet me at your side,” Ethel resolutely broke in.

„When several together wear the weight of a trial, it is easier,” remarked Mrs. Graham.

„Only have all dear ones near and license to behave to them as sentiment inspires,” Ethel went on.

„But the more you rely on me, my love, the more anxious I become whether, I am deserving of all your sentiments. Surely I have many friends, who would attempt to constitute a good testimony for me. I shall lead you into a wide circle, that may delude you as to my real wort^t, I must truly hope for ever."

„Richard!" exclaimed Ethel, with a jarring tone in her voice „Don't pronounce such jests. They are below the dignity of a man like you. But I am glad to know of so many friends of yours, for in them I see what you are everywhere."

Richard was momentarily abashed by the unforeseen reproof, while the irrepressible Maud entered on a new suggestion: „We ought to bring papa over to Liverpool, to assist at Ethels wedding. Is n't that a sensible idea?"

„No, no" uncle Arthur checked her, „he would never do that. Don't set your mamma meditating on that old gap in our arrangements. Your papa will not leave the conveniences he is certain of in London; you won't lure him here."

„Then you shall give away the bride, or are you going to perform the service?" pursued the mischievous creature.

At that instant Richard, having regained his composure, cried: „Here comes one of the friends of mine. And a trusty one, Ethel." Allan Graham made his appearance, in high spirits and cheeks as glowing as his heart. Maud was not for giving up her point on account of the momentary interruption. „Allan, here I have been just hitting on a difficulty. Uncle Arthur ought to marry Ethel and Richard, but at the same time he should also give her away, what a perplexity!"

„We must have two persons for sure" laughed Richard.

„And I think it will be arranged that uncle Arthur gives her away" Mrs. Graham concurred with a smile.

„No," interposed Allan, „uncle Arthur must perform the

ceremony, Mr. Moffat will give the bride away. That is the most natural expedient."

The gentleman alluded to was the former musicmaster of the Misses Graham, who having established most friendly terms with the family, still liked to drop in of an evening, play with the girls on the piano and have a chat with pleasant Mrs. Robert over a cup of tea.

By a curious accident, about a half-hour later, Mr. Moffat actually introduced himself, to complete the number of the most welcome intimates of that house. He was Mr. Clares friend in the first instance and had passed into his sisters household through the reverend gentlemans mediation. A greater straitness of means even looked out of Mr. Moffats apparel than Arthur Clares, and a loose red neckcloth set a final stamp on the shabby, let-go appearance of the high gaunt man, who did not depend on his clothing for the effect of his personality. I cannot conceive what music has to do with hair, so that it must always grow with a certain flowing negligence on the head of even an unconceited genius. Nor do I see, why talent must induce the dress to fall into the most exclusive folds and give it a slovenly, loose tendency. I can imagine, on the contrary, that the fiery dark eye has something to do with the almost emaciated form, with the lean hands, with the prodigiously long nail on the thumb. In those orbs, bordered by the black shadows of hair and whiskers, I can detect a restless passion of soul, that tells on the body, wherein it is shut up. That nail betrays the real vocation of Alexander Moffat, wherewith he runs over the strings of his violin, the mistress of his heart. Miss Maud was always wondering how it did not molest him on the keys of the piano. Ethel found the look of it disturbing, but Mr. Moffat could only be taken as he was, and if the nail added to his performance on the violin, it certainly should not be opposed.

„Here I have caught a lucky moment“ said the musician, stepping in, „as I find all my friends assembled.“

„You find more than that yet, Mr. Moffat“ smiled the lady of the house, „you find an engaged couple, Mr. Lansdale and my eldest daughter.“

„What, that is a glad surprise, in truth, a very, very glad surprise,“ he responded, shaking hands again with the two referred to, whom he had already saluted. „I rarely receive news that rejoice me so unlimitedly as this. I wish all that her desires can conceive to your dear daughter, Mrs. Graham. For ladies the hopes and expectations of future depend very intimately and conclusively on the choice of marriage. I devoutly confide, that God intends to bless you in your children, Mrs. Graham.“

„You are all so glad,“ said Richard, „yet probably I am going to take Miss Graham away from you all, to Coketown, where I suppose I shall join my fathers business. I am but a bad boy in the end.“

„That is always the way, nor does it matter, when one parts in happiness. I have all dead voices in the tunes of my violin. I think this night I shall compose a violin-piece, which I would dedicate to you. This news has so elated me, that I feel an inspiration approaching. My sympathies with the present belong to this house, Mrs. Graham. Do there exist friends yet in the world besides?“

„Mr. Moffat, you do not ask that seriously?“ cried young Lansdale. „You would be assailing me in a delicate point, my dear sir. I dote on the friendship of a thousand.“

„You are a chosen one of the gods then.“

„You do not believe it. But I always avail myself of everybodys amiable disposition towards me and that is the natural course. If I do it too much I can't help it. I can't bring myself to draw bounds around the circle of my friends and it gets larger every year. Others must be

more cautious or I could not so far exceed them in the number of intimates."

"Put them to the test," said Mr. Moffat. "Probably you can have all you like to accept, but there are people to whom friends do not offer so profusely, and that is not a good sign, eh Allan?"

"Allan no doubt would hold that quantity injures quality, which I don't admit, for when there are one or two men worthy to possess our inmost heart, there surely ought to be a hundred. I have that good opinion of my fellow-men. As to abusing theirs, my conscience is not delicate enough to let me be stopped by the apprehension of that," Richard Lansdale concluded, with an ingenuity, innocent beyond question, of having purposely provoked a complimentary response from the other side.

Nor did Allan take it as a challenge when he rejoined: "A man who is sure of his own fidelity needs not fear to be abusing the agreeable dispositions of his neighbours, as fidelity is the chief requisite in all true relations among us. In a hundred you have a good chance of encountering many per cents who league it to anything than the heart of a friend."

"Distrust is the food of misery," Richard opposed him. "Give me belief in man to the end of my life. Don't shake it injudiciously."

Well, while deeds advocate the cause of trustful bonds, a word will not attack them dangerously.

"So you are going to compose some new music, absolutely in honour of Ethel and her betrothed?" Maud now followed up the thread of her special interest. "Oh, Mr. Moffat, I am so curious."

"But you must not think of it this evening" Mrs. Graham put in, "it will be night, when you come home."

"And in the night, madam, inspiration speaks to me. Nothing equals the state of mind in the small hours of

darkness. Then I am alone, then the stars glide by, then the living sleep and the dead are wandering awake. I never touch my violin then, though I had the desire, that no one may possibly listen to me, but music is in my thoughts and I write it down. Allan, you have passed such a night with me."

The ladies looked up surprised, and the weird, visionary eye of the violist seemed to mark Allan with an affinity to himself. "It was in these last days" Mr. Moffat pursued, "and my boy has not mentioned yet, I see, that he stayed with me the last time he visited his old friend. It is no secret. There should be no wilful secrets at all, the smallest thing, as a secret, does harm. Our intellect should vanquish as much as it is able the secrecy imposed by nature — the utterable secrecy of thought. I say all my thoughts, and the few I dare not say in words are innocent in the musics disclosure."

"Very good" said Allans arch little sister, "Mr. Moffat missed that lesson for you when he dismissed you from that obscure visit. Don't grow reserved, sir. And don't repeat the diversion too often, for the late hours have been harming Mr. Moffats constitution already, is it not so, mamma?" "Mr. Moffat lives too much in spiritual visions to pay sufficient regard to mortal life. And unfortunately he stands beyond the influence of prudent advice."

"Ours is a quarter for late hours," Mr. Clare digressed from the subject of prudent advice, which perhaps he had reason to opine was to be very cautiously administered. "Down to the very babies our people eschew the midnight slumber."

"Ah" laughed Richard, "your people are of the class, who have work to do at midnight! I wonder if you have not met Mr. Rosens assaulters among your parishioners yet, without knowing them."

„And if I knew them, I would not denounce them” returned Mr. Clare. „Don’t count upon that, my dear, brave son.”

„What, you would spare them a deserved punishment?”

„As soon as I suffered myself to obtain the character of a denouncer, I would loose my character as their pastor. Would the sinner confide in me, when I leagued with the worldly force for repression of crime? Those men attain the pitch of depravity because they are hunted on every side and thrown upon their own demoralized self. But some of them at least are men yet at all events, and are not callous to all their experiences of fellow-beings like a cat or an oxen. They are fierce like the chained dog, but they remember the hand, that found an opportunity to approach them in good-will.”

„And the while they imperil those, who had no such opportunity.”

„One more or less will not alter the standard of safety. But a breach of faith in me would cut them off from the last link to the church of Christ. There must be an honesty that wooes them in friendship.”

„We hear of friendship and benevolence very badly requited by such characters” said Richard.

„Because long inactivity and neglect sometimes deadens every humane emotion, or even that benevolence comes too condescendingly as from another sphere and does not warm their petrified hearts with the spirit that touches it. A whole life in the bosom of their own, no scientifical philanthropy, but love with open hand and eye, that is how a ray of purity may struggle towards them unrejected.”

„It must be a great sacrifice so to associate with them,” Ethel remarked.

„I would try it, I would lead their own life among them, full of the knowledge of temptation and the study of its resistance, a citizen of their sphere. Uncle Arthur, I am

not so far removed from doing it yet, for with my apothecary business I may just find a place there."

"Allan!"

"Even in good Mrs. Grahams voice there rang a tone of disappointment in her more sparkling hopes and purposes.

"Will you do it?" exclaimed Mr. Moffat in his impetuous way. "Sacrifice! You will not disqualify yourself for the attempt with founding it on that expression, Allan. I call it sacrifice, if you will, to go among the high, the refined, the exalted ranks of the world, to search for their magnanimity, their sensibility of feeling, the exaltation of their views. I have had opportunity to search, and here you find me, with nothing, with no tie, no sympathy but from you. I have been a violinplayer, but no identity of manhood to the people who made use of me. I have been slighted, often and often, for no better reason than this coat of mine," slapping its greenish black tails.

"Well, well, my dear friend," Mr. Clare appeased the orator, "probably they couldn't know that you wanted to be more than a violinplayer for them. As to the slighting, some individuals are so awkward, with the best dispositions, in treating with people out of their own, accustomed clique. I could not fancy Ethel fraternizing with my poor workman or my suspicious subject from the bylanes — she would never acquire the way for it. Maud yes, she would do it on occasion without teaching, I am sure."

"I think," said Richard, "there is a special art in rightly treating the lower classes. To give them gratification one must be very amiable, entirely free from haughtiness of course, but one must never afford them the idea of being on a level with them. Then our advances lose their worth. We are drawn down in their estimation, there is no graciousness in our approaching them, they find no more a pleasure and an example in our company. One must go, so to say, in a silk dress into their huts and do as if

unconscious of it; they will recognize the grace of t
with a plain dress they will not feel so honoured and
stimulated."

"That will do with your poor and honest simpleminded
people," said Mr. Clare, "for my part; but not for those
who have sworn hate and rancour to decent society, whose
humours are not to be petted nor only their bodily wants
relieved, but on whose souls there is to be exerted
vital influence."

"Well the soul is the clergymans science, dear Mr. Clare.
When you are my Lady Bountiful, Ethelreda, I shall not allow you to go to any but honest people,
I shall keep her as jealously as that, Mrs. Graham."

"No harm would come to her, though you did
Mr. Lansdale," the artist remarked. "Nor can you make
good your promise, sir. No, I have forsaken the old
stinctions, I bet you the crossing sweep against the cultivate
wellbred gentleman, whose virtue is never investigated,
his honesty never impeached."

"Nor need be perhaps" argued Mr. Clare.

"I can prove you something of the need of it
something I can not prove. I can show you him, who
praised for feeling, aye, and has it to a degree, who thinks
nothing of taking the poor mans penny and adds to
destitutes oppression, to live in castles and feed on luxuries.
I can show you the virtuous, who if they are far from
rogues trespasses, are as far from his penury and all
circumstances of his existence, and have underhand faults
the more brazen and abject, as they are hidden under
costlier veils. Sift your virtue, I would call out to you,
honourable, selfcomplacent society. Attorneys who
lawsuits round and round their fingers, the high chancery
meaning always least to do and best remunerated,
noblest heirs, who ought to hold their incumbent offices
for honour alone, ambassadors sustaining the prestige

the country with liberality from the public exchequer — ah, and I should shun and spurn those who are also trying some mode of living, good or bad, also putting their own wants before the convenience and comfort of others, also deluding others and themselves in a measure? Will you decide on a preference for the one or the other, Miss Graham, in a position, where you will have a choice of them? I have decided for the rags and the broom."

"You praise the crossing sweep because you expect less from him," said Mrs. Graham.

"Appearances that served to awe the masses, are keeping them back, to be despised and imposed upon."

"Gently, gently," said Mr. Clare. "Revolutions in old systems come natural. Better have them awed, than allowing them to get all society into a muddle with illdefined conceptions of theirs. Have them raised to the height of sound, solid, judicious understandig, and no need for us to inveigle to battle, for they will tranquilly make their way for themselves — to right, liberty and all."

"Then I must always have the right estimation and consideration from their fellow-creatures for them, from every individual one. I tell you," Mr. Moffat proceeded, subsid-ing into his occasional exaltation, always hovering around the mention of his artist passion, "I tell you, my violin has actually saved a' life once. It was a boy, whom I had heard from at my friend Clares — several times convicted already of larceny and getting a customer of the prisons. I took him home with me, and knowing of no better thing, I gave him music. The boys soul vibrated to its pure revelations, I succeeded in turning him into another path — he leads a worthy life now. And surely I possess but a small part of the power of my beloved art — it never touched with this decisive force my distinguished pupils, or the brilliant assemblies, as far as I can judge. That was a good side of the mudbegrimed population — there

are elements in it, eh? Regarding their murders and cruelties, it sometimes occurs to me they would look rather small in a battlefield — a field of proud, european victory."

"Well," cried Richard, "it is not everyone however, who will see inducement to live in the midst of labourers or craftsmen of the thieving profession. Nevertheless, if anything should be done for them, I wish the day will come, when I shall be thankful to you gentlemen, uncle Clare, Mr. Moffat and Allan, for useful hints upon the subject of reforms in their favour. This is a branch of my aims not worked out hitherto."

The alert Richard pursued the theme yet for a little distance with the most lenient benevolence, the most sweeping proposals, the most amiable philosophy. Then the ladies took the sceptre of the entertainment and decreed music, light talk and merriment. However Richard may have been content of drifting into general problems, I think Ethel was very glad to change the heavy topic for a conversation of sweetness and brightness. When Mrs Graham intervened, saying: "Are you not going to give us some music now, Mr. Moffat? I fear the time before tea is running short," Mr. Moffats whole mind instantly revolved upon his favourite office and removed him far from his terrestial causes of ire. Richard pressed Ethels hand when he played to Mauds little songs of love, Mrs. Graham reclined with fond attention when he, solo, performed an ancient ditty and the entire company floated away into dreamland when he touched the mightier strains. There soared a hallowed happiness into the room, that did not release the party to descend into any other temper again. When the lovely evening closed, one was too happy even to be cross with the hours, for sliding off so swiftly — and many other evenings would come round yet, as grateful and as fair.

On Mr. Moffats taking his leave, Maud said to him:

"Have you not thought better about your composition to night yet, Mr. Moffat? You need only bring it on the very wedding-day, with a nice cover and Richard Lansdale and Ethel Margaret Graham upon it, in large letters — their full names, if you please."

"Richard Martin Lansdale then" said Richard laughing, "an unfortunate addition, to my taste, and I try to drop it altogether. The nuisance of being made to bear all the superannuated names of ones godfathers or great grandfathers. I pray you, sir, put only Ethel and Richard."

"Yes", said Ethel, "to accord with your designation, if you don't want two names. I like my Margaret though."

"Oh yes, that is pretty, but Richard Martin is not in taste. I put great value on taste, it should not be overruled by arid considerations."

"Not by feeling?" Ethel asked.

"Ah, feeling of course rules uncontestedly sovereign," he replied, as the knight of love.

Chapter VI.

The Tour to London.

Richard had bidden good-bye to Ethel for a few days. He had walked to the Lime-Street Station to secure a good place in the afternoon-train to London. The letter announcing his engagement and his proposed departure was whirling up before him. The young gentleman was passing from one pleasant experience to another. Ethels tender adieu was uppermost in his mind — while he was amusing himself on this tour to the stateliest city upon Earth, how gratifying to think that down in Lancashire every day would be counted, that he stayed away, on a hundred occasions he would be missed, every step of his

followed with flattering musings. 'Ah, how great was his love for Ethel, as he thought of her, with her last caress, with her smiling entreaty, that he should not tarry too long in circenish London and her admonition to take care of himself. Women are warning us upon all occasions to take care. Dear Ethel, she will be a something wanting to him, in the throng of the Exhibition, in the gallery of whispers under the cupola of St. Pauls, in Conventgarden and the charms of Richmond. The young betrothed contemplates this fact with a complacent sentimentality and leans back in his cushioned seat with a grateful sigh.

About an hour after his leaving Liverpool behind, his sister Gwendoline, with her young sons, looked in at the elder Mrs. Grahams. She had taken the children out for an airing and looked as fresh and sunny as a Junerose. „Well, Richard is off;” was her first observation, „he’s gone to buy you a toy, Dicky dear, when Dicky interposed himself obtrusively to attention. „He will have quite as merry a tour as when he had gone with papa the other day. He was not quite ready yet, then, Ethel” — she concluded with a sly laugh.

„To-morrow he will send off a letter for us” said Mrs. Graham, „to give notice how he arrived and has been received.”

„I saw Richards train passing from the railway-bridge in Sandown Park. Off it went at a rate — dear” she suggestively informed her sister-in-law. Ethel mused in secret, that she would have liked that peep down on the roof even of Richards carriage. And I fear they talked of nothing else during Gwendolines call, than Richard — which was certainly tiresome and foolish to the judgment of a third party, for Mrs. Lloyds call was comparatively long and I found that not even Bertie, the baby, entirely got his due. Ethel prayed so devotedly for beloved Richard that night, on her knees before her bed, so much more

fervently if possible, as he was farther removed from her sight — that surely the angels who listened to her, watched over his health and his safety, his fortunes and their love. Oh there must come a blessing to such a prayer from a full heart.

The railway traveller had worked himself into such an ardour with his absent love, that upon arriving at a stage of his journey, where he parted with his present carriage and entertained plans for a slight repast, he had penned a little note to be sent back on the route he had traversed, to knock at Ethel Grahams door.

„I send you a kiss from Birmingham, love, because you have kept me such rapturous company all the way here. I have nothing more to say for I have seen nothing until now, but you. With my own hand I deliver this slip to the post, as it is the least and most I can do, to kiss my hand to you" and something more of that sort. Having just ten minutes to spare before taking the start again, he rapidly wended his way round to the nearest letter-box. He was coming up to it with the cover open in his hand to dry — he could write notes when he wanted to — when he beheld the form of a lady moving away from the dark gap greedy with devouring letters day and night She brushed hurriedly past him, it struck him, with rather an air of stealth in her demeanour he noted that she was clad in a plaid dress and her features hidden behind a blue veil. On some discreet errand there, no doubt a love errand? He approached the receptacle of his epistle, he stood just before it, when he remarked his foot treading on a yellow envelope lying upside down on the ground. I did not look like an empty, thrown-away thing, he stooped and took it up. It was a sealed letter, ready for posting — George Rosen Esq., Liverpool — was the super-script in a neat female hand. What a coincidence! Was the discreet ladys missive fallen from her surreptitious

hand, without her remarking it in uneasy haste and through the queerest accident into his? As it was ready provided with stamps like his own and no doubt as to its intended destination, after a moments reflection he dropped the letter into the box together with his own.

With the good conscience of having done his best in the behalf of a stranger, Richard Lansdale, receiving a playful kick from the motion of his engine, sped away from Birmingham. In the carriage he entered he had found a trio of ladies ensconced in a corner and had taken his seat opposite. Being not quite well settled yet when that kick came, he was in the trouble of regaining his balance when somebody said: „I thought this was a ladies' carriage.”

Allowing a moments pause after this remark, being absorbed in the arrangement of some bags and chattels he had, and a small pile of books he bought at the last station, Mr. Lansdale turned round and defended himself against the gentle aggression. „I beg your pardon, ma'am, it is a gentlemans carriage as well.” But I am not going to light a cigar” he added, with his inclination for turning off things pleasantly.

„I don't dislike cigars” returned the voice, laying the stress meaningly on the last word — and collapsed into silence and resignation.

Oh that voice! What a melody it had. What lovely ingratiating tones, — Richard would not have been over anxious for a conversation with the lady, after that beginning — it ruffles a mans temper for a time to be in any wise objected to though it be only in the general character of his sex. But that voice almost bewitched him. It was rapture to hear that voice. From a charming mouth, from a sweet soul only that voice could speak. In the whole circle of his acquaintance he had never heard any accents approaching to it. And it had but pronounced, let me see one two three, seven eleven words in all. The

young gentlemans eyes had by this time been busy singling out the speaker, and taking the inventory of her outward distinctives. Plaid dress, shawl in a heap by her side, face, neck, head converted into an enigma by the folds of an ample blue veil. Plaid dress, blue veil, is this sufficient identification with the lady of the letter-box-of the yellow envelope? Richard decided to risk a mistake He was not sure that his interrogator had any connection with the other two ladies, their fellow-passengers, who had rather a simple, countrefied air, though his young dame had crept up very near to them. She made an impression of timidity on him there in her place he liked any but shy girls. Prim modesty and graceless reserve he could not endure. But the voice rang in his ears and the letter tickled his mind.

Mr. Lansdale rose, and stood bowing before the veiled lady. „Excuse me, but I believe to recognize you from a passing meeting a few minutes before our present encounter in the train. Near the letter-box —.”

„I left a letter there, yes.” In the murmuring tones of shyness. She was not so shy though, as to be imposed upon by unwanted company, if not necessary.

„I think I may inform you that you did not drop that letter into the slit of the box, but on the ground ma'am. A letter in a yellow envelope —.”

„Addressed to Mr. Rosen, Liverpool” said the figure, with a lively movement.

„The same. Then I take leave to inform you, that I posted it to the indicated address. I hope I was right.”

„Thank you, yes.”

There was nothing for him but to retire. He had indulged the luxury of the voice, and the voice evidently was not for immoderate use. He fell to reading his shilling novels and reviews, but not again to dreaming of Ethel so deeply, his surroundings diverted him a little from

meditation. The two elder ladies dozed off, knocking against each other without being wakened even by that — the young lady — the voice authorized one to say so — sat like a statue. She had no idea of making herself comfortable, of trying positions, of looking out of the window, of accelerating the time in any way, that it took from Birmingham to London. She was going on to London, surely? Though she was a dull vis-a-vis, Richard would not have desired her to alight at one of the intermediate stations. She was a puzzle, which one is not disposed to give up though one does not gain so much as a step with it. Richard had just drawn a skreen before him with a big daily paper, when the Voice said: „Oh dear, how hot it is.”

Letting down the paper by and by, unconcernedly, without reference to the uttered exclamation, he saw her face uncovered. A charming face. Mr. Landsdale was quite satisfied with its lineaments. He had only conceived a curiosity to behold it to a very easy and natural degree. The voice was the supreme fascination that acted upon him. Without the precursory voice he would not have adduced much importance to the uncovering of a handsome face well, just as much as it behoves a man of taste.

The observation about the heat was directed to nobody, not to the two ladies, who now were consulting together in undertones and bustling with their appendencies. They were about to leave at the next halt of the train. When the two good dames rose, when they opened the door, got through with their baggage and it closed behind them, the unknown young lady looked up with alarm. She was very young. She did not look older than Winifred Rosen, considered her scrutinizer, quite the contrary, and yet there was something in her mien that caused him not to wonder quite so much at her being trusted alone in a train, with her uninitiated air, as he would have done at the cotton

merchants daughters greeting him in the twilight casting its first shadows over the railway carriage. The girl suddenly rose also and walked towards the door, almost loosing her footing however as the whistling engine once more gave a shock and rattled away. Her staggering brought her within the reach of his outstretched, supporting arm.

„You were not going to descend at this station?” he asked.

„No, I am going to London” she said, with pretty embarrassment, „but oh I was so afraid to be left quite alone. I am not used to travel 'all by myself.”

„But what did you propose to do just now in this emergency?” smiled Mr. Lansdale, considering inwardly that if little Miss had been recommended to the care of the two ladies departed, they certainly had not given themselves the faintest trouble with their charge.

„I thought I might change the carriage for one with more people in it. I felt so afraid,” she reiterated — a smile was flitting over her face too — no, it was rather in her eyes, a curious, transient smile, uncalled for, I should say, for what meaning could be given to it? She had blue eyes and fair hair — blue are the orbs of innocence and fair the locks of the angels. Richard saw her face better now; in a discourse that was fairly setting in at present, he had opportunity to study it nearer and in the variations of expression. While talking, came out the real charm of her features irregular, as such features are, and piquant.

„You are very plain-spoken, young lady,” he rejoined, all but breaking out into a laugh. „I must pardon your unflattering implication however and solemnly assure you that you are left to the company of a gentleman. I have met many young ladies, who would travel with the utmost assurance alone in a railway carriage, but I admit that

there can be a risk in the arrangement, and I will not be offended at your not being able to read my heart."

"I was comfortable with the two old ladies. I hoped they were going up to London I have no idea about the stations between —."

"Be comfortable now, if you please, under the protection of a gentleman, that will last you till the end of your journey. Being so little versed in railroad history, I wonder how somebody could send you thus out into the world alone. I am glad to have fallen in with you"

"Oh, nobody sent me I—I have gone on my own account on — in my own affairs."

Goodness me, to hear such a declaration from the artless lips of that childish creature! Childish? what was childish in her, and what was not? I have the impulse to refuse the adjective and yet upon argumentation I may be obliged to accept it.

Richard, not to be importune and uncivil, had to swallow the curiosity roused by this observation. "You have ventured forth on your own responsibility; then I cannot help imagining that you must be causing anxiety to the somebody I was going to charge with too much unconcern before" he bantered.

The young lady made no answer.

He searched for other recourses to keep the light of her eyes burning.

"I knew you were not graciously disposed, when you expressed that suggestive leniency with my cigar. You said plainly: the cigar is harmless but I distrust the man. I hope you will give me testimony of having proved me better, before leaving the train. Have you heard of the horrid tales about snares laid for railway-travellers, described here, I wonder?" pointing to a compound of dreadful incidents called Manchester Gazette or some such name-lying on his lap. "How clever to sell such papers at the

stations and instruct passengers as to the dangers of their situation."

"They lull people to sleep, and prevent their crying out and kill them, do they not?" asked timidity, with all the hellish fancies rolling over each other in her blue eyes.

"The chief result is that they leave them as bare as a rats tail, when the carriage stops with one drowsy inmate instead of two bright and lively ones. I suppose you know of that attempt upon Mr. Rosen some time ago" — he thought it a suitable moment to diverge into a theme promising a glimpse into the cards of his companion. But for that letter to the merchant he would still have been addicted to his first suspicion of the love-errand, but what could an amorous adventure have to do with respectable Mr. Rosen.

The stranger was unacquainted with the perilous accident mentioned by Richard. She remembered a burglarious attack upon the house of the merchant which had probably breathed its last of comments before the present hero's time, probably even before the enormity of the latter event had usurped the whole attention of gossiping friends. They spoke on this subject about Mr. Rosen for some period without Richards alluding to his connexion with it and without the girls being beguiled into any indication about her own relations to him. She was making astonishing progress in confidence on the other hand, to a degree that Mr. Lansdale mused how well it was that not a person he was less sure of than himself had lured her into such familiarity. He explained that he was rather a good acquaintance at Mr. Rosens house, in order to accredit himself in a way to her confidence.

"You cannot be an acquaintance of long standing there," she argued impertinently, "as you do not know anything of that theft, which was reported to us though we did not live in the town at this time."

"You belong to Liverpool?" Richard tried, who being kept exclusively in generalities with Mr. Rosen, wanted to trace her home so far at least."

"No, I belong to the bells of St. Pauls" the unknown one declared. You do not," she added, pertly again.

"I am only drawn towards it by the magnet of the Exhibition. Everyone must contrive to see it, there's no help for it." "I have seen it. It is very extraordinary."

"Oh what good luck — tis the very overflowing of my cup of fortune to find you an erudite of the Exhibition. Tell me the impression it has made on you."

"It was dazzling with all that light through the glass, it made the eyes sore besides to single out all little bits and odds collected together and it was worse that there was meant to be a studious order in it. Will you look at the jewels? Oh I liked the jewels, the crown-gems and the Koh-i-noor. I should like to have the Koh-i-noor myself" — once more with that suddenly lighting smile in her eyes, as quickly subsiding again.

She was very amusing. She had some fund of naïve wit and made the most surprising remarks unawares. A man of Richards exquisite education was not long in observing however that her talk was inspired by natural intellect and fine spirit rather, than by careful scholar breeding. The more unreservedly she talked, without letting slip the slightest hint conducive to the question of her position in life, her connexions, her objects, the more he wondered at that guardedness coupled with such brisk volubility. She had a secret reason sedulously to avoid giving information about herself. He arrived at a persuasion however. Her commentator set her down as a young actress. That would suit her free, untutored manner with that combination of sparkling, free grace, not closed against much improvement by judicious guidance, as he caught himself reflecting with some concern. That suited also her conjunction with

Mr. Rosen as that gentleman was in the habit of aiding and favoring artists and talents of greater or smaller brilliancy. Why not a singer, with that magic voice of hers? No, not a singer; surely it was most made for speaking; but reciting pathetic passages from the boards of a minor stage, would it not demand applause from a goodly audience?

He artfully began to turn round conversation to the theatres. The young lady knew something of theatres at all events. He commenced with the large ones and then remarked, that probably there were very good stages besides, whose names were not so familiar to every one as Haymarket, Adelphi or St. James.' For estimable middle-class people, who sometimes had the knack of finding out things good and cheap. The gentleman investigator was quite complimentary to the second-class stages, taking care the while not to offend the first water ones either. He was very clever, that adroit young man. — There was so much in a name, though Shakespeare would not have it so; people did not want to go to a theatre and see a nice play or hear an enchanting opera — they only wanted to have been at Drury Lane and heard this or that famous singer, sing how she would. The gods preserve me, his vis-a-vis was not famous already? The most dexterous conversationalist can not possess circumspection enough, one has so little time to balance ones words, you see. But the suspected actress answered so innocently. She owned an infantile love for pantomimes.

„When I was little they took me to see „Harlequin in the palace of flowers” and the „Spellbound Princesses” and many more. I know all their names yet. Didn’t I like it, wouldn’t I like it still, but I have no little ones to go with and I am such a grown-up person already.”

There were little theatres in the East-end, of the good and cheap order, such honest little theatres! „I don’t think the great ones honest, sir, at least I have heard say so, for

the managers pay the most outrageous salaries to the courted celebrities and raise the price of the tickets so as to put them out of reach of the ordinary public. And just the less rich ones enjoy it most, I am sure."

That was spoken out of Mr. Mossats heart. Richard had heard him touch that strain often. "Wouldn't the gifted ladies and gentlemen sing for half their present salaries? Couldn't they be quite glad with less yet? Always the competition between the lords of the calling to vaunt their exertion and munificence to secure the best abilities, while they suck their reward out of the public and drive people away from a chance of cultivation and ennoblement of taste. A singer lives on the deprivation of common mankind like a queen or any overpaid functionary, the artist would cry. What common-sense the little creature before him had!

"But I can't tell so much about London," pursued the lively girl, "one only knows ones especial haunts in a great city. The dozen streets I regularly pass through on my daily errands." Ah to know those streets!

"You might be lost in other parts, I well believe it I fear I won't get near an East-end theatre, though I have a taste for seeing just the things not mentioned in guides and known to all the world. The humour of visiting places lies for me in finding out novelties and hidden gems, the philosophers stone, if you will."

"Ah, the importance of the inferior theatres is more for people who have but the choice between nothing and those. In themselves they are all alike. Is it not queer to be always making believe and to get the public to feel quite in the scene? It is a queer, queer vocation. But second-rate actors do it as first-rate ones. I prefer the decorations gorgeous and beautiful. Yes I rather like the first opera-houses for that. They will be full enough now with all the people from the Exhibition."

„Have you found London more full than at other times with that host?”

„I had no chance to observe. There were enormous numbers in Hyde Park, when we went. I fear, when you are visiting the Crystal-palace quite by yourself, you will find it a bore. You will be sorry of having come all the way to see it.”

„Oh, but I shall not go alone. And I have to give report to others left behind; I wonder how it will prove.”

„Those others are not able to come and look, like yourself? It's well to be a Londoner in this case. I feel quite a pity for the phantasies they will have, down in the country.”

„There are some, who will follow me yet. I cannot stay long in London this time, but if I like the Exhibition, they will have me back in this same train before its close. Not in such bright company as this time, probably, though”

When they neared London, his companion grew apparently absent-minded, much as she seemed to strive against it. „Can this really be London already,” cried Richard, „and have I to resign my championship so soon? I should like to have done greater things, young lady, preserved your life or your purse, to inscribe myself in your memory. But you will give me my certificate as a gentleman all the same?”

„I hope I shall not have been missed in London” murmured the girl — was it that smile again, or was I mistaken?

„When you even fear to have been missed, I would give it you as a parting advice, that you do not make such a tour again, if you can help it,” Richard took up the whisper.

„But I could not help it. — Do you think that letter you posted will now rightly find its address?” she broke off, in a voice just settling after an agitation, it might be guessed.

“There is not the least doubt. You are anxious to know of its arrival?”

“I should like to know of it,” she answered evasively, “oh yes.”

“Pardon my presumption, young lady, but I would judge from appearances, that you perhaps stood in some especial case of need —” Richard said gently.

“In need of money? Does it not mean that? Oh dear no. I am not in need of money.”

“May be in need of a friend? You might apply to Mr. Rosen for that.”

“Oh, yes, sir, you are right. One may apply to Mr. Rosen not in vain, one has no friends nearer.”

“If I only knew your name, I might follow up that communication of yours and hold myself to your further service yet, maybe,” hazarded the young man, having come to the opinion that his new acquaintance might be treated unembarrassedly like a child or unreservedly like a public character. “I may find opportunity to speak with Mr. Rosen on the subject.”

“I am only the daughter of a person he knew. My name? I am called Diana. But no, no, I cannot tell my name to-day. There the train is stopping. Oh sir, you were giving me such a fright yet. You will never meet me again. Surely I have behaved very wrongly and badly; you must forget all about it. I know that I am young and foolish. Very foolish. Thank you, sir, I thank you very much.”

She seemed in a frantic hurry to alight. The girl's manner was certainly extraordinary; her eyes, apart from that inherent smile had changed from sly twinkles to a melancholy calm, to a harassed gaze, besides the differences of expression attending every diverse sentence. What was the nature of her secret? But an innocent one, on my faith, when she sought George Rosens assistance. Artless-

ness, the least bit tainted by some professional art, or contact with art, maybe. Good bye, winning, melodious voice! As from a lovely painting in a picture-gallery.

Richard turned away from the fascinating face, to the image of his betrothed at home. But how dispose of that voice, which is thrilling and caressing in his ear? Within the last hour of his tour he had certainly not had leisure to keep in mind the very existence of any other person, than the creature before him. Would Ethel be captivated by her voice? She should give it some eulogy. Would she pronounce Richards vis-a-vis beautiful? She would evade the decision, make subterfuges about her approving or not approving, would say it could not be denied that she had striking features, but call her pretty, lovely — no verdict, my dear.

Richard and his companion of a few hours parted. „Good-bye and good luck,” he said to her. „You tell me that you are called Diana. Remember me as Richard then.”

Chapter VII.

Richmond and Holborn.

Women are inquisitive, very — that is a truth — but not a whole one. It expresses but the half of a truth. With your permission, gentlemen, I say: humanity is inquisitive. Petty distinctions are unjust. If any representative of proud manhood should find it incumbent on him to refute this tax of communism in our widely propagated frailty, or force, it may turn out sometimes — I still maintain steadfastly that I know my men, and that they often are more inquisitive than is good for them. At this moment, I vow, Richard Lansdale is more curious than Ethel Graham would

have been. He is bent on keeping in sight the lady of the blue veil, as she winds through the crowd at Euston Station. Untenable design however, for of course she is lost in the throng. He kept his eye on her as long as he could and there the idle exploit ended. On reaching the street, nevertheless, by an accident vouchsafed but to one in a thousand, Mr. Lansdale, keeping in the heaving and jostling mass of humanity, of a sudden found himself all but at his fellow-travellers elbow. She was standing, the creature, just as she would do when everybody walked, and a person had joined her, perhaps at that very instant. An old man, with a white beard, who might be a sort of ancient servant of her family, Richards shrewdness suggested. A venerable relic maybe, with as little proper grace and attractiveness as relics generally have.

„All gone according to wish, Miss Cooper?“ he distinctly heard him say, in a voice guarded only against listeners by an inborn huskiness.

„Now you needn’t begin by asking questions at the very first moment“ replied Miss and casually moving her head round a little, her eyes met those of the but half accidental spy. She quickly cast down her gaze and Richard as swiftly bent forwards his pace, for it must be owned that he felt ashamed.

He went to Euston Hotel to take supper and a nights lodging, as he knew that it was in vain to seek out his father at such an advanced hour. He made himself comfortable yet in the saloon downstairs as he felt very little sleepy and consequently, having gone to bed in the morning, he awoke in the day.

When he arrived at his fathers hotel, that gentleman of course could not be expected to be there. The elder Mr. Lansdale had taken up his abode at an hotel in the Strand, with his daughter and his sister-in-law, to be near the central attraction, and according to the taste of his ladies

more in the life of the metropolis, while Mrs. Lansdale stayed at her eldest daughters villa in Richmond, enjoying quiet and country-air. So Richard only ordered some rooms in the Queens Hotel and then set out on tracing his family at Richmond.

At his sisters delightful dwelling he had the good luck of finding its chief members united, dispensing with Miss Ansted, who was abroad on some excursion with Anne.

Mr. Lansdale received his son with more than wanted kindness. He was pleased with the last communication from Richard, it was the cause of his good-humor indeed. They met in the garden, where the sire took a complacent stroll and hailed the newcomer: „So you have chosen for your happiness and elected one of the Graham girls. You could have done no better, my son. Twas early, it seemed to me, but I am reconciled to it. I married late and have sometimes reflected I might as well have done it sooner. You wait a year or so of course yet, and then I settle you nicely with your patrimony.”

„You are satisfied, my dear papa, oh I am more glad than I can tell. To hear you say that I have chosen well. Ah, I was not blind in reference to that when I proposed to dearest Ethel. I ever knew her as pure and true — and with that she loves me, dearest papa, that it almost makes me fearful.”

„Ethel Graham is a girl who would grace any mans house. I esteem her greatly” said Mr. Lansdale, not given to sentimental elocution. „Do you know, my son, I had a faint suspicion that you were going to court that German cottonmerchants daughter. I should not have impeded you, but I 'd have been ashamed to apprehend my son wooing the rich mans heiress. It would have been a degradation in my opinion, who have risen to a respectable station by my own effort. My own effort, Richard. Never live on anybodys money, be it then on that of your father, to

which you have a right. Even as it is, you will never taste my satisfaction in my self-earned fortune."

"Well papa, I never dreamt of suing for Winifred Rosen. I do have so much spirit too, as not to grovel abjectly for lucre. And if I liked any girl, I would despise her dowry, sir. I may go so far as to say, I would never look at a rich girl for heed of this encumbrance. My heart is independent, sir."

"You have means enough at all events, and if you had not, I hope you would put your shoulder to the wheel and scorn them as a gage d'amour. You are another sort of man than I am, you have had other chances, but I hope you are a man, Richard."

"As regards the present theme you should read my determined opinion in my heart, papa. And besides, we are on the other side of the hill already, for I am portionless Ethel Grahams true-love now."

When they went in to the ladies, Richards sister and her tended guest, Mrs. Lansdale, he came in for a further reception, of a somewhat different description. His sister was rather indifferent as to the matrimonial choice young Dick was going to undertake. The mother, somewhat listless and inane in the expression of her strongboned face, held out her hand to him with a smile, rendered foolish by ending in a laugh. "Where have you been all this time, Dick, that you didn't come sooner? I thought we were going to have you here, in London, in Richmond."

"He stopped in Liverpool yet, mamma, and got engaged to Miss Graham you know," assisted the daughter.

"Yes, you are engaged and Michael is very glad of it, Dick. You have done very well, dear."

"Oh yes, I have the gratification of seeing that everybody is content. How have you found Richmond, mamma? You look exceedingly well." — "It is beautiful, it is very nice. The garden is nice and I look from the garden at the

people passing. Michael, my dear, I am going to stay here for a good time, you will allow me to stay here" looking at her husband and breaking into a laugh.

"Of course, my dear, you shall stay as long as you like," Michael replied, with the tone of subdued impatience indicative of her having made that appeal repeatedly already.

"Mamma fancies the new scenes, and indeed it must be an exhilarating change from Coketown. Won't you tell mamma more about your betrothal now, Richard?" Mrs. Lee put in. "Well, what shall I tell you? Don't laugh again, mamma. It makes me laugh too, and one shall not laugh without reason. I am going to give you Gwendolines love now, and Ethels —"

"Ethel. Does she love you much, Richard?"

"As much as you can wish. You did not observe we were in love, that fortnight you were in Liverpool? On your tour back you must pass through Liverpool again. To study your future daughter's character."

Richard thus pursued conversation with his mother after his usual way, thinking that he fitted himself very obligingly and dutifully to her understanding and priding himself inwardly of giving it some undercurrent flavour, of humour, to relieve its simplicity.

Miss Ansted, on her appearance afterwards, maintained herself stiffly congratulatory on the subject of the engagement. I have a notion, that in like manner as her brother-in-law, she had also drawn Winifred Rosen into consideration, with rather a contrary kind of view to that gentlemans. When they were alone, talking the matter over, Miss Ansted said:

"She is very ladylike, indeed, nothing can be objected to her. Mrs. Graham, with her subsequent poverty, has managed admirably to bring up her daughters. I prefer Ethel to Maud, for as I say, she is quite the lady, she will never fall short of what may be expected of her in your house."

„But that is not all, aunt Helen. What I fancy in her is her taste, her accessible mind. She will appreciate all the beautiful that I can give her, she will revel in a library I may gather together for her, the smallest item of elegance will not be lost on her, she has such a sense for it, all beautiful by art or nature will make her happy, when I lay it at her feet — mind, aunt, that is the crowning completion. Oh to have a wife, so congruent with the aesthetic life I mean to offer her and so animated with watchful, zealous love. The harmony of ones own soul. To tell you the truth, aunt Helen, that is a thing I have hitherto missed in a measure at home. Our house is not an aesthetic one. You are its elevating spirit, but now with papa one can speak almost nothing and mamma is out of the question. Even you, aunt Helen, could not introduce a rule sympathetic with the higher refinement, with the more exquisite subtleties of ethics, because papas practicalness was against it. And you would have your own way still” he laughed with the genuine frankness aunt Helen so lauded in him, „but my wife would have my way.”

„And you are in the common lovers-belief that there is but one woman in the world who can grant you all this.”

„If there were more, why take the trouble of seeking them, when I have found one?”

„Because another might unite still more recommending qualities. But the thing is settled, you are bound to Ethel Graham for honour and good and there is no call to examine the question from all sides afterwards.”

„Aunt, aunt, you have caught the disease of our house and are harping on the point of money. It can only be an exterior deficiency in Ethel you can be hinting at, for I defy you to show me an interior one which should send me exploring elsewhere.”

If it needed an object to make Richard Lansdale more content with his choice yet, it was his aunts airy disappro-

bation, for that sad young fellow had a special partiality for being in opposition to that good lady. Her fondness for him, her irreproachable conduct did not save her from being silently taxed by her nephew with a lack of loftiness of opinion and multiplied errors of weakness peculiar to her station and range of mind. Any prejudice of hers would throw him the more wildly and ardorously into the counterpart extreme — with an obliging and amiable congé to his diligent tutors precepts, be it understood.

But from Richard Lansdales father I should have passed over at once to Ethel Grahams father, whom the happy knight sought out a good while before he had the opportunity for this interesting conference with his aunt. Mr. Robert Graham was domiciled in one of the busy streets near Holborn, in dingy premises on the third floor, squeezed in between presumptuous trading-establishments and the abandoned lofts of cunningslooking houses with a great many spectacles on. Mr. Grahams room was somewhat dirty, yet it had been swept; it was provided with a good window, but the window was blind; it was poorly furnished, yet it was not bare, because it had introduced many articles of use, which another lodger might not think of putting in his parlour. There were the boots under the chair, the cause of the dirt on the floor — there was a wash-basket filled with papers and trumpery, there was a number of indefinable curiosities, such as this wonderful earth of ours has manufactured for unreckoned purposes to the delight of superterrestrial spirits looking on. The ornaments of the chimney piece consisted in a blotted inkstand, a candle and a box of matches. Mr. Robert was rather of bulky proportions and possessed a pair of fine auburn whiskers. He received his future son-in-law very complacently and graciously. It was Richards good luck again that he found the gentleman at home, for he was mostly abroad from morning to night. He did jobbing

business, never failed an opportunity to make a small profit, knew all opportunities about town and jogged on with as much contrivance and as little exhausting labour as he could. He did copying work, he undertook small commissions, he was a factotum to persons, who had not the chance or the impudence to dive into all the secrets of underhand affairs, that wanted suiting. It is a spectacle to contemplate, how a man can fall from the customs of his natural society into the habits of a new neighbourhood, so as to suggest the metamorphosis of insects realized before our eyes, though it must be said rather like a butterfly producing a caterpillar than vice-versa.

Mr. Graham was not insatiable on the subject of his wife, of Ethel, and the rest of his family in Liverpool, on the contrary, I believe Richard talked too long about it for his taste. He kept in excellent temper all along though. Then they fell to talking about London and about Mr. Graham himself. „You see me in very convenient lodgings here, my boy,” he pointed out, „roomy, in the right quarter and cheap. I always succeed in finding out what I want — at a low price. All commodities can generally be got at a cheaper rate than most people pay. They pay so much for fancies, sir, for fancies. They want things to look well, to have a good name before acquaintances, to serve for some sort of pretension. I buy only for the intrinsic value. I know gentlemen of my standing who take furnished lodgings, thinking it an easy arrangement. Nothing is easier than to buy ones necessaries at a sale, while one is about all day long in the street and looking in at this shop and at that. They want things purely for the appearance of a chamber; why, if you receive visitors on business, they 'll mind the business and not the chamber; if you have friends to call, they 'll take my furniture, as they take me. Many a job have I done by recommending the sale of some bankrupt lords establishment or some

broken-down merchant grandees — half the prize of the purchases went towards their former owners name. Ha, ha, they know me, and give me the genuine stuff unadulterated."

„You must look out well to get it so, notwithstanding, I suppose.”

„Oho, I am sharp, Dick Lansdale. Did you find the stairs too much to come up to me? Many people have a vanity to live on the lower floors, I have a vanity to live on the higher ones. Nobody will take me in. I know all the tricks they practise about London Shall I show you about the town, sir? You will be sure to be cheated somehow, when you trust to yourself and to strangers, being so new, as they 'll know you to be in a twinkling. I have seen your father already, Lansdale. I informed myself soon that he had arrived and am at his service too, as an old Londoner. A real old Londoner I have become, — in a short time, my boy — as good as a Cockney, you won't contradict me.”

„And you never think of leaving the metropolis again, Mr. Graham?”

„How can I? Not, while I am pendent of Chancery, at all events. That lawsuit must come off before, sir; they shan't see me yield, if they think to wear my patience out”

I shall never touch the subject of the Chancery business again; for you discern, that quite the reverse of Mr. Dickens, I here show how serviceable, how accommodating these lawsuits with anything but an end sometimes proved to people, how instead of consuming them with harassing anxieties and unfruitful excitements, it kept them quietly in their places and afforded them the most welcome excuse to live after their peculiar pleasure. This can be done in few words Praise is short, while blame is long. Mr. Graham would put a complimentary epigram on the tomb of the woolsack.

Later on Richard delicately hinted, if perhaps some monetary accommodation might be acceptable to this merry, married old bachelor of the elevated regions.

„No, sir,” Robert Graham answered decisively, „your father has asked me that too, already, but I said, I don't take loans, thank you; as a principle, I never accept loans. If I did not make that a principle, young fellow, I'd be in the debtors prison next. I wouldn't walk the streets so easy any more and not be on such admirable terms with the jews and the bailiffs. You see me now of a morning, of an afternoon, of an evening — without cares — without cares. I know almost all people in London, but friendly, sir, from the Lord Chancellor to the constable. There are few I have not heard from, of the regular London customers.”

„Down to the pickpockets, sir?”

„From the pickpockets to the shopowners they entrap. I have them pointed out to me by a policeman. When I go out with you, I'll show them to you, when we meet any. They are not so often met, as you — as the green ones from the country apprehend. Not at all. Only go with me.”

Richard then pleaded if Mr. Graham would accept his offer as a gift, supposing that his proposed son-in-law might be desirous to make him a present and would consider it most sensible to give it him in money. Whereupon R. G. was prevailed upon to pocket the little sum. „Thank you, I'm quite obliged to you. A present is gain — it has no consequences. Any profit is an advantage, while it is honourably procured. You keep on the right terms with the world. Honesty is the best policy, I have got on well with that adage and will to my dying day. Crooked ways ever mislead the person that goes them himself, in the end.”

Then he asked Richard where he was staying. „At the Queens Hotel in the Strand? As I remarked already to your father, you mustn't stop there. They always charge un-

fairly in hotels. I will look you up the nicest, economic lodgings, in a decent neighbourhood, till to morrow. I'll give notice to Mr. Lansdale in the morning. It vexes me to see people spending, out of sheer unacquaintance with their chances."

So, when young Lansdale was descending the stairs of Mr. Grahams premises, out steps that gentleman, already the pipe in hand which he left off lighting, to bawl down over the banisters. "Mind what I told you about the cabfare. Don't be misled by your remembrance of the high rates you are accustomed to pay in Liverpool!"

Mr. Graham gave notice about the lodgings in the morning. And it so happened, that meeting Michael Lansdale alone, he prevailed upon that economical gentleman not to stay another hour in that wasteful establishment, where the ceaseless noise from the street besides had worried the old Coketownsman to a degree. Lodgings in a quiet street near Holborn acted rather as a bait upon him. Therefrom it ensued that the two men — those untoward rogues — set to work emptying the drawers, huddling together all the things Miss Ansted had neatly arranged for herself and Anne, bundling them up finally in aunts and nieces fine new shawls and arrived at the point of making off with their prey to its unprophecied change of habitation, when the ladies came up after their ramble to Madame Tussauds. I call upon all ladies to figure to themselves Miss Ansteds consternation on beholding the scene in the bedrooms, and to decide, whether they would have forgiven Mr. Graham for that trick in their lives. And worse, as the fundamental intent was speedily realized, and the quiet lodging near Holborn proved to be pervaded by stable scents, to be devoid of any delicate breeding as to the few noises that rang through it, and requiring much attention to the hot-rolls cry, if one desired that dainty for breakfast, the ministering friend came in

for little charity at the hands of Michael Lansdales sister-in-law.

Indeed, Miss Ansted behaved in such a manner on that occasion of the shawl-bundles, that it inaugurated a real reciprocal emnity between her and Robert Graham, who loftily pronounced her to be, for ever afterwards, an unreasonable woman. It mattered little though, as the head of the family had listened to reason.

Chapter VIII.

Mr. Clare at Home.

When Richard Lansdale returned to Liverpool after this tour to London, he did not rest in his urgings that the Grahams should also see the Exhibition in its present glory as soon as possible. He had evidently enjoyed his visit will the fair warner Diana never hear his verdict? It was settled already that Lloyd would take his sisters on this grand expedition, while Mrs Gwendoline stayed meekly behind, consoling herself for prevented sight-seeing with the care of her thriving baby. Meanwhile the love-making went on pleasantly at home. The finest subtleties of attention and recognition formed its pervading feature; Ethel did not impute so much value to words and flashing gallantries as to the still small voice in every turn and action that whispered almost inaudibly the sweet burden of love, love. Richard was quick to understand her, as quick as he always was to flatter everybodys inclination. He kept the cup of his bride elects bliss filled to the brim. Morning and noon passed in dwelling on his marks of devotion ere the later hours brought himself holy emotions, that indeed angelize woman, if her heart holds more than the paramount passion and expands in the joys of an

inward paradise. Miss Graham was sublimized, enriched by her fortune, more beautiful in her place at home, now that she was being half drawn away. Yet did not the rosy hues of this but too often intoxicating epoch impair her acute discrimination and her pronounced personality. Half just, half austere, these sometimes intervened in the halcyon may of their courtship.

To-day, Richard Lansdale and Allan Graham meet on the doorstep of the Graham house at the time between luncheon and dinner. The former is on the point of entering, the latter on that of leaving the dwelling. I am astonished at finding Allan here at this hour, and not in the least astonished to find young Lansdale. Because Ethel's brother generally has no superfluous leisure hour to bestow out of his druggist-shop, while Ethel's betrothed keeps no account of his time at all. Allan has a strained and weary look in his eyes, which it must have pained his mother to detect. Richard perhaps did not fix his attention upon it. Many men not quite in his easy position may have no trouble to explain the meaning of that look — Mr. Graham is thrown out of occupation and dawdling useless weeks away in the attempt to find a new one. Of all states and positions in life, uselessness would be the foremost to prey as a care on his mind. Richard has never yet got a taste of the apprehension of this.

When Allan, having come in for luncheon after a fruitless morning exploit, stood behind Ethel's chair, while Mrs. Graham was about some arrangements in the kitchen, he said: "What are you doing there, Ethel?"

"I am knitting a purse for Winifred Rosens birthday."

"That is the day after to-morrow, is it not?"

"Yes, dear, so it is."

"When you go to Mr. Rosens, love, you will not mention my ill-luck, my search for employment. I would rather

not that Mr. Rosen should trouble himself to settle me somewhere, as he might do."

Ethel looked up sharply: "You have no unreasonable objection, Allan, to admit another man's help when it is in honor acceptable?"

"Not generally speaking, Ethel."

"You need not be ashamed to be indebted to Mr. Rosen for a service of that sort."

"No, yet I prefer not."

"Brother," said Ethel, rising and laying her hand on his arm, looking him straight in the face, "you wish to stand independent of Winifred's father."

He gave a slight start of surprise and paused for a moment before he answered, returning his sister's candid look: "I should think that better while I have the choice.

"I don't see the importance of it, nevertheless."

"In Richard Lansdale's position and with his happy genius of success I might not see it either, but with ambitions to realize and very probably to fail I would have no obligations in the way of things that may arise out of them."

"Very probably to fail," repeated the sister disapprovingly. "You are not the young man who need expect to fail at the very outset. Don't indulge in such talk it doesn't suit you."

"Sister" said Allan, bending down and speaking very low, "we understand each other. We are speaking of Winifred Rosen. I am not the man to suit Miss Rosen."

"You cannot know that any more than every lover does. If you mean to allude to your respective positions" — her voice rose and her eyes flashed up fiercely — "if you would imply that, I will not allow a girl who calls me her friend to be debased by such a supposition. You have no reason to doubt of good exit beforehand, none at all. We never have been accustomed to measure worth by unqualified standards never, Allan."

„Hush! Our ways are not all peoples ways. From infancy I have always been noted as an unlucky fellow and I suppose I shall be so through life. I don't say that I may not be as worthy of any girl as many to whom it never occurs to be shy in their hopes. Let that be enough for the time, dear. I have been very happy all along of being unlucky, hitherto. Perhaps the fates have made out the case for me thus. And a good thing it would be, Ethel."

However well Allan Graham may have thought to have left the question at this point, Miss Grahams temper was not improved when Richard Lansdale made his entrance. And as ladies of a somewhat severe disposition never are at a loss to find a fair and virtuous ventilating point for the humour roused in an opposite direction, the young engaged one found a highly justified reason to be cross with her lover. The rich manufacturers son incontestably had but too slight a notion of the duties he owed in the interest of his commercial education and the desirability of earnest application and steady attention, wanted to make a solid foundation in the mind of a young man of business. He was not a volunteer in Mr. Rosens business, he was a volunteer every where — for the advantage of an excursion, of an idle friend, or at this latter time on account of bestowing his presence on his fiancée. The latter did not care so much as Richard may have imagined for this drift of his inclinations — her orderly mind felt hurt at this disregard of practical obligations, at such a loose rule of daily life. She did not desire to be the cause of disturbing him in his pursuits. She did not hesitate to hint this to him occasionally.

Richard made his appearance before her in his most unconcerned and his live liest manner, perhaps not entirely unconscious of being in danger of Miss Grahams righteous reflections and therefore much given to banter and light talk.

„Allan has found no place as yet,” he remarked, not having got on very well with other topics of conversation. „You are very much troubled about him, it seems to me.”

„I see him anxious for occupation, which is holding out long this time. You don’t know what it is for a man like my brother to be in want of regular daily working hours.”

„Allan sometimes loses his places, doesn’t he? I have suspected sometimes that he is of rather a difficult disposition.”

„May be that he can be called so. Some people are able to agree with everybody and everything — Allan will never be such a nonentity as that in any state of life.”

„Yet as long as one cannot be master one must submit — allow for circumstances.”

„Oh yes, to a certain degree.” Miss Graham was very little conversative to-day and looked on Richards pleasantness rather coldly. I own to the shrewdness of suspecting that the contrast between Allans necessary and Richards unnecessary lounging struck her especially disagreeable on this occasion.

„My poor dear, to think of family cares weighing on you already. I came here in hopes of cheering you a little.”

„Don’t take such pains to cheer me, if you please, Richard. My mind best settles itself with the ordinary course of our homely habits. I hate irregularities that seem to take undue advantage of incidents which they cannot alter. Looking forward to your visit in the evening, dear, is enough to wish for. Do me the favour not to let me infringe on your duties.”

„I fear, my love, that I have none so very formidable duty to oppose the sweet one towards pleasure and you, as you imagine. I have not yet the power in hand for some which I anticipate and can afford to make my preparations leisurely.”

„What does your father say when you speak so to him?”

„My darling, you are as grave as a father at this moment. Who expects that from his engaged bride? I do what I believe that I can allow myself to do. I make you no concessions, Ethel, do you see? You shan't lose your respect of me and reduce me to the character of a convicted transgressor.” Mr. Lansdale tried to laugh off the discomfiture at discovering that his presence was not with equal grate fulness acknowledged under all conditions and that Miss Ethel ventured to point out obligations to him. He was disappointed that his love could not forget the remaining interests of the hour in his animating company. The young lady was disappointed that her lighthearted wooer showed himself ready to join in anything than the subject that preoccupied her thoughts and wanted to direct her ideas to some out-of-the-way trivialities. She did not pardon him his indolence without a warning. Mr. Lansdale possessed the assurance to call again the next forenoon and establish himself carelessly in Mrs. Grahams parlour. After some indifferent talk with mother and daughter, the latter excused herself from the room on the ground of being busy and was not seen any more in the course of his visit. By and by Richard made it up in his mind very clearly that Ethel meant to be sulky.

Besides having the good fortune to have a fiancée, Richard Lansdale also had that of possessing a horse, a fine, surefooted grey. Not getting on so well with his lady-love he took a little more to his horse. He looked splendid in the saddle and no one could chide him for investing a portion of his liberal allowance in the livery stables at the corner of King Street. „Our first lovers quarrel” he thought complacently, as he swung himself on the back of his steed, to amuse himself with a ride. It was only a short time since he had made this addition to his comforts and had pranced up to the windows of the Graham dwelling to be admired by Ethel and Maud. When the

summer days were warm, he felt it less on the back of Dragon than at his desk in Mr. Rosens office. So it came to pass that Ethel, having arranged for a noontide excursion with Winifred and the Osborne ladies in their pony-phaeton, met the rider far out in one of the rural lanes galloping up to them with a graceful and unembarrassed sign of recognition. Both the lovers stood on their ground however until the epoch, when the tour to the London Exhibition broke up provisionally the actual current of proceedings. Richard took his pleasure somehow in the day and spent the evenings peacefully with the Grahams; Ethel upheld that her own time was not at ,the disposal of love making before dinner and mused in the evening how her cavalier might possibly have chased away the sunny hours.

On one of the bright Sunday eves the whole party, Mrs. Graham with her two daughters, with Allan and her eldest sons family and Richard Lansdale in attandance, had gone to uncle Clares little church for the evening service, intending to go home with him afterwards and spend a few quiet hours in his dear little parlour. Allan had found employment at last — found it in his uncles poor neighbourhood, on the stipulation of strict attendance and miserable remuneration. His mother felt more disheartened than otherwise at the announcement of this success, but Allan spoke about his engagement in Mr. Kenyons druggist shop in a curiously excited strain as if he were rather exhilerated at the idea. His eldest sister, who was generally averse to inferior positions and surroundings, listened mutely to his discourses this time and watched him with a reserved meditation.

The Rev. Mr. Clares parishioners filled the humble place of worship absolutely to suffocation, at least for the refined inspiration of Mr. Lansdale, who was glad on that account when the service ended. There were people in

the church who looked as if they had only stepped in out of curiosity, others as if they had entered with the intention of leaving again instantly, many who appeared not entirely at ease within the congregation and few who seemed to have propriety in view as the reason of their church-going. The sermon treated of the text from St. Matthews, Chapt. XIX, v. 27: „Then answered Peter and said unto him; Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?“ The people appeared to be attracted by the way in which the clergyman repeated that question from the gospel and expounded it; he spoke simply, without an effort to lay more solemnity into his manner than existed in his words and without abandoning the even and majestic flight of religious exhortation to stoop to the lower understanding of his audience or rise into some demonstrative eloquence beyond it. Untainted by the pulpit-acting affected by the pastors of some more fastidious herds, he spoke as a man anxious for the promotion of good to an assembly, whom he supposed to accept his opinions, but to be strongly wavering and sluggish to assert them by deed. „Behold we have forsaken all and followed thee“ — who is here who durst begin his question with this asseveration? „What shall we have therefore?“ You ask that with a speculating hope because your present life is dreary, and full of voids, and appalling. You wish to do work and gain price. But there are some of you here, if not many, who shrink from honourable steady work and prefer slovenly, haphazard modes of living and starve rather on the idlers ignoble crust than on the labourers scanty wages. You have no sense of honour, you have no ambition that warns you off degrading paths, though you quarrel with those who possess what you do not; you have no energy, you have no love. Yet you would have a meed of the grace and joy in Heaven and Earth. Yet you have the sense within you that you have not

earned it, and that makes you fearful. And there are others who have done a part, like the young man in the same gospel, and have reserved one thing which they are not ready to give up to Jesus and go away sorrowful. You must go on wearing that dull serrow and that helpless misery — on, on, through this, our common life and the next, further, further, until you return to our Lord even at a late hour, and work for him yet as in the parable of the labourers in the vineyard. Why will you not do it at once? Your sedulity will be pleasant in the practice and you will exercise it for the pleasantness of good and not for the reward that best comes unawares. As truly as Peter himself has shown himself weak and human, as surely do not plead your great weakness against what I tell you, for the Lord who knoweth his friends and his foes, hath answered Peter: 'Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel' — Wash your hands in moral purity, and you may judge in godliness of yourselves and life. For if you possessed your whole judgment, none of you would stand back for a moment from what I bid you do from the pages of this Holy Scripture and Testament."

Mr. Clares preaching was an urgent pleading with a half-reluctant crowd, it was full of bible quotations, calling the minds of his hearers to the Holy Book, which might not be too familiar to the hands of many of them and which held mightier words than his own. He spoke stronger and sterner than one would have judged him capable of in private intercourse, but gently, persuasively he argued the charms of virtue to win a farstrayed soul to its christian duty. Richard Lansdale complimented him with glad sincerity at the close of the ceremony, when the preacher hung up his garments in the vestry and the

party was preparing to leave church for the pastors house. „I daresay you must exercise a considerable influence over your parish, my dear uncle; you have moved many to-day, as I judge — you use your language most effectively. Ethel, my love, if I had not ambitious hopes of Richard Lansdale, I would be in uncle Clares place. You look on your life with satisfaction, do you not, sir?”

„With satisfaction here and with repinings there” replied the clergyman with a mild smile. „There are things which seem almost impossible of execution. Is there not little Walter coming to the door? Martha always sends him here with me. She believes it essential to his welfare to hear as many sermons on the Sunday as he can possibly attend. I let her have her way. When the poor little chaps parents were sent off to prison and I chose one from the heap of all but orphans they left behind, I brought him to Martha to do her best as a mother to him, and so she must after her conscience. You have not seen him yet?” Mr. Clare broke off shortly to his sister, as if all his remarks were premature then. „Is he a good boy?” asked Maud.

„Not overgood, boys seldom are, least those who are not accustomed to training and resent it. He is the eldest of a little flock of four; I couldn't take the girls nor the baby. Besides those will not make much trouble, but a child of eight with rather bad antecedents already requires a bit of patience.”

„Has Martha patience?” broke in the irrepressible Maud.

„Well, between us two we have a little patience, I think,” smiled the pleasant old man. „I gave him the name of Walter, Alice,” he pursued, „because I could not get at his right name. I asked him how he was called, and he said „Chinney.” I could not get out of him nor somebody else any other. Now I have not the remotest idea, what Chinney may mean, I know no name like it. If it is an abbreviation, I can't find it out, can you?”

„One must see his certificate of baptism” suggested Maud. „That is some way off, I believe. In the meanwhile, we have called him Walter. That’s a civilized name and suggests rather a good boy, does it not?”

The not overgood boy with the good name presently made his appearance. A flaxenhaired urchin with a freckled face, relieved by a pair of sly blue eyes, with a little of honesty and a little of cunning in them. He put his hands in his trowsers pockets as soon as he found himself standing before the party at the entrance to the vestry and looked from Mr. Clare towards Maud and from Maud to the ground, alternatively. „Now you know what Martha would say, if she saw you with your hands there” indicated his guardian kindly.

„But she does not see me, because she stopped at home and did not walk to church. I should have liked her to come to church too.”

Mr. Clare was on the point of a rejoinder to the effect, that obedience was not limited to the moment of supervision only, but Richard had caught up Walters sentence already and inquired of him: „So you like to go to church yourself, I understand? And you like to be with Martha?”

„I don’t like one nor the other,” replied the boy shortly, passing his interlocutors face with one of his furtive glances.

„You don’t love the church yet” spoke Ethel, standing at Richards side, „I hope you will before long. You should, hearing the gospel from Mr. Clare.”

„Then why did you wish Martha to have come?” asked the preacher.

„That she may do herself what she sends me to do. I liked the service less to day, because Mr. Moffat was not there. Mr. Moffat was not there, sir.”

„He fancies Mr. Moffat” smiled Arthur Clare. „His presence makes you more comfortable, little one?”

„Then I look at him all the time, and look at his hair and see how he moves his head — from behind."

Maud burst out into a merry laugh. „What an excellent attendance on the service" she cried, and broke into another peal. Walter watched her very gravely all the while. She caught his serious eye. „Come, let him be my cavalier for the home-walk," she said. Let me go with Walter, I must talk with him yet. We walk in pairs, Richard takes Ethel, mamma with uncle, I beg your pardon, I should have named you first, Lloyd and Gwen, I and Walter — Walter and I, I mean — and Allan, ah, you make up the rear, or you open the way for us."

The procession being arranged accordingly, everybody seemed very well in his place and not least little Walter by the side of Maud. The way not being long they were not far from Mr. Clares door, when Richard discovered that he had lost one of his gloves. This caused a halt and a little consultation. „I suppose I left it in the pew; I am lazy to walk all the way back and perhaps not find it. Let us go on, if you please."

„It's lying in a corner near the vestry door" suddenly was heard in the voice of little Walter.

„What, the glove, you have seen it and didn't take it up?"

„No, because I don't like the gentleman."

„You naughty boy" exclaimed Maud, turning away with an angry gesture.

„My father did not like men who wear gloves" added the urchin.

„Nor you either" observed Allan.

„I don't like him. I won't pick up things for him" — with a determined air and putting two of his fingers in his mouth. Mr. Clare looked very much chagrined. Richard laughed. „Do pass over that, uncle, do" he said magnanimously.

„No, that will not do. He must learn behaviour."

Richard persisted generously. „Let him learn that he has no reason to bear me a grudge. And on Sunday evening too.”

„Do we not sometimes feel a smack of malice too, only that we don't indulge it?” laughed Allan, looking at the stubborn figure of the little man. „He is only so many years behind in polish.”

Reaching the end of their walk after this intermezzo, they found Mr. Moffat installed in Mr. Clares parlour on a chair by the window. „Why, Mr. Moffat” exclaimed Mrs. Graham, „I wonder that you didn't come to church.”

„I did not feel in the spirit to go. I am never able to make a custom of anything; sometimes I am urged to do this, sometimes that. Such is my rule. I wanted to sit quietly here and see you come back, my dear Clare, and so you find me.”

„And you have a whole company coming in” laughed Miss Maud. „You are doing your best to hide your horror, Mr. Moffat.”

The violinist, of all other things, was not a bantering man; with a look that was almost a rebuke of the young girls insinuation, he waved the proposition without taking the pains to protest against it. The party of newcomers almost filled out the clergymans little room, considering that the furniture was already somewhat too much for it. There was Mr. Clares desk and his armchair by the window, with the chair selected by Moffat creeping up as near to it as it could, then the bookcase and the harpsichord which looked like an inheritance from the days of the great-grandfathers and as thintoned as an echo from that time, also the sofa and table which must find a place and a small table yet in a corner, littered with small books, all of one description, in blueish grey paper covers.

Walter was sent in to Martha on the instant of arrival. Mr. Moffat observed the little fellow as he retired with

sulky mien. „He is in disgrace” said Allan, „and expecting nothing good from old Martha, I vow.”

„This time he has to do with me, though,” remarked Mr. Clare. „I leave to Martha only the corrections that necessarily fall under her jurisdiction, and I like to take from her any that are practicable. Walter does not take too kindly to Marthas rule, and it is sorry to concentrate a childs apprehension of reproof on one person; that engenders and develops antipathy. Besides with due appreciation af Martha, I doubt of her judiciousness in some instances —”

Mr. Clare very prudently had sunk his voice while making this declaration, for just at this juncture his elderly house-keeper made her appearance, who certainly did not look as if she would like to have doubted her judiciousness or anything else about her. She came to make the preparations for supper and was as resolutely and uncontroversibly satisfied with her tidy teathings, the tea itself, the toast and the noble dish of ham and eggs as some diplomatist will be when he has managed some political arrangement. Possessing the virtue of not talking abundantly, she also had the principle of never allowing other persons to say anything that did not agree with her opinions. Being of so firm a mould she naturally disagreed with more people than she agreed with and was never shaken in several preconceived estimates. She liked Ethel, Mrs. Graham and Allan, she disliked Richard, disapproved of Maud and did not care for Gwendoline. I never understood her opinion of Mr. Moffat, perhaps he being a man of varying impulses, he also made variable impressions on her. To-day she cast a sidelong glance at the harpsichord, which stood open, probably against rule. Mr. Moffat rose, ran his fingers over the keys and shut the lid. The sound of the instrument was thin, but pure — shrill and clear as the voice of a boy that is delightful in a chorus.

„You are taking a deal of trouble for our entertainment, Martha,” said Mrs. Graham pleasantly.

The good woman’s face almost relaxed to a smile: „It’s not every night that we have such company here, mum; there’s only Mr. Moffat, or Mr. Allan, or Mr. Adams dropping in occasionally, and they only take ale and bread and cheese — nothing comfortable. I’m thankful for your coming and being pleased with my fare. Miss Ethel, here’s your cup and saucer, which I have served you the tea in since you were eight years old.”

„As old as Walter. Does he not break his cups?” cried Maud. „I’m sure he does.”

„Let him try to” was the ominous reply.

„What do you say to your little charge?” questioned Ethel.

„I am always ready for the duty that Mr. Clare expects me to perform. I hope he is not doing some mischief again” — she burst away, hearing some unaccountable noise in the back departments.

When the visitors had settled to their hosts supper-table, a momentary lull had come over the conversation and the clatter of spoons and knives even seemed at the point of subsiding, somebody knocked gently at the door. The somebody went farther and opened it a little, very softly, and the persons in the right position at the table, who were Mr. Clare as well as Maud, could see his face. It was a face not endowed with what we call good looks, nor with any other markedly prepossessing characteristic, rather young, clerical, with little color and too much nose. The head gazed in blank amazement on Mr. Clare’s numerous company, drew back and gave no further sign of itself.

„Mr. Adams!” called out the master of the house however, and that appeal evoking no reply, he swiftly rose and pursued the vanished intruder outwards of the door.

He brought in the latter after a minute or two, very reluctant and unwilling, only being forced to interrupt some subdued remonstrances by the necessity of politely saluting Mr. Clares family. The young man, being at full figure a long, sleek person, embodying the uncompromising features of the religious calling, was made known to the assembly as Mr. Sidney Adams, the new curate of the Rev. Mr. Mason of St. Bartholomews church in the adjoining parish. No sooner had the young clergyman passed through the general introduction, than he proceeded with his protestations.

„I thought I might come in and read with you for an hour, my dear Mr. Clare; I only looked in to see if I came opportunely, as I sometimes do.”

„Quite right, Mr. Adams, and now I wish that you stay here and take tea with us.”

„No, no, thank you. I — I am not seeking that sort of pleasure on the Sabbath evening —” he explained hesitatingly, with a deprecating look on the ham and eggs and on Miss Mauds careless, smiling face. „I am so accustomed to find you alone, sir — there it's striking the quarter to nine — good bye, Mr. Clare, good bye —” with a comprehensive mumbling and a comprehensive bow he had left the room.

„What an ogre of a curate” exclaimed Maud, as soon as she believed herself sure of not being overheard by the person concerned. „It is provoking when a gentleman does not take the pains to hide that he wishes one far away. And I hate to be introduced to somebody to whom it is obviously indifferent whether he is introduced to a stick or a lady or something, so long as he gets quickly over the ceremony. I do, uncle.”

„Mr. Adams is a very good young man, Maud, my dear. Only he is a little more pedantic and punctilious in his vocation than I have upheld as requisite for the sake of

religiousness. Mr. Adams will consider me an absolute heretic in many things."

"And no one will love him as he loves you," persued uncle Arthurs untamed little favourite. "He must be an awe-inspiring parson when he grows old."

"Not at all. During the months while I have made his acquaintance he has shown himself as an earnest zealous divine, as a diligent and unremitting student, in a word such an active, honest man than we could desire no better for a city-missionary, which is an office that I would promote before all things. Mr. Mason being rather a phlegmatic man and I being led by certain ideals to some real experience perhaps, we have come to take much interest in each other already, combining the ideals and the experience. What do you think of Mr. Adams' writing little tales for children, moral stories of course, but fairy tales and all that?"

The evening repast having come to its close by this time, Mr. Clare went to the corner-table strewn with the books in the coarse paper envelopes. "These are the things I sometimes regale my wee friends with. This is a heap to be sorted and to select the appropriate books from, they are sent to me by Mr. Adams' publisher. In some schools they give books as prizes for assiduity and good comportment. — I never could bear prizes for doing ones duty, not even for the childish mind; no bad, untenable customs even for the beginning."

"Virtue sometimes needs encouragement to grow into strength," threw in Richard Lansdale.

"It needs more finefeeling assistance than the poison of material remuneration. A good, wellchosen book is the best present I know of to make to a child. For small people I want tales of healthily good children, taking much care that the moral is not overworked and so made unpalatable to the living emulation. On the other side I abhor warnings, as I read in my earliest years, exposing

wickednesses and their punishment to serve as a frightening example. When wickedness is expressly laid down before the infant reader, he will detest the exaggeration used to set going the moral machinery, he will confirm all the more his evil inclinations by experiencing the satisfaction, peculiar to human nature, of finding his propensities reproduced in some removed quarter and his mind may be brought to bear on a novelty of evil things. Bright, pure images for the souls in process of development, full of objects that are visible, but high; the simply sublime, the plainly beautiful — there is so much of it. I am delighted with Mr. Adams in this respect, he has such a poetry in his conceptions; his style will please the most primitive peruser, but he may return to his story-book at some later age and find a new tale, reading it with the understanding that finds the deeper spirit under the superficial sense of the letter. Take one or two of the booklets with you, Maud; here „The Wish of Thomas Ward” — that is his newest and his best, to my taste.”

„You attach great importance to reading, uncle Arthur,” said Allan.

„Is it not the bread of the mind, my boy? All the experiences and occurrences of life are its nourishment, but a book, when it is worthy to exist, should be baked as bread with wellweighed measure, of clean substance and with responsible care to the end. One does not starve either for the lack of it, thank God, so far greater are the resources of the spirit, but its influence is mighty enough for the comparison. Many of the printed thoughts are traduced to life by the reader — theres a great importance in what they communicate and what they teach.”

Richard did not withhold from those present that this drift of observations at once directed his ideas to popular libraries. Ethel smiled pleasantly at his impetuosity. „We shall sit of an evening and choose them together”

her lover said to her, „we will know every book in the catalogue and have given our approbation to each.

„We will be hardworking people, my own.”

„Work is the groundstone of happiness” assented Mr. Clare. „Some want to get over work to the hours of pleasure — I find that activity is not less of an enjoyment than rest, just as one of them cannot subsist without the other. God has not set apart a few hours for especial happiness, as little as he reserved us some period for the exercise of especial goodness, it is for us to settle into a fair and even flow.”

If the estimable Mr. Adams had but stayed when Mr. Clare invited him so warmly, he would no doubt have abandoned his fear of profaning the Sabbath in too lightspirited a company, for as some people will remain irretrievably frivolous on the Sunday as in the rest of the week, Mr. Clares circle maintained a highbred dignity of comportment which need not be set into extra posture for the Lords day. Of course he would have objected to Maud, who could only afford to make the nearest approach to solemnity in church and Mr. Moffat would have failed to discover a secret spring of harmony with him. How can it be asked of such widely-differing natures to accept the same customs, though they submit to the same supreme laws? Methinks tis for nature to pronounce the code of customs, and for man to proclaim the laws of God. Custom is the foremost servant of the material world, law is the master of the spiritual position.

Chapter IX.

The Fivepound-Note.

If I had set one of my heroes or heroines to the task of telling the history of the Lansdale and Graham destinies, and more if I had done it at the moment of their experiences having happened, this section of our chronicle would have turned out a Chapter of London. We would have got interesting, but rather familiar details about the curiosities of the Crystal Palace, also about the ancient relics of the Tower, of the monumental treasures of Westminster Abbey, also the whitebaits of Greenwich and the swans of Windsor Park. We might even have come to hear how elegantly dressed society was, how ladies wore bonnets with feathers and bonnets with ribbons, how they were esteemed fine with such and such sleeves as they are to-day without sleeves, how they looked in London as they looked in Liverpool and so on. Maud would just stray into a mention of such things and Richard knew more about them than might be expected from a young man.

However, the bursting bloom of enthusiasm lies on a garden beyond the river of time and better still, it is not my own subsided ardour, which rises with the records of past events, so I turn coolly from the Poets Corner and the famous Magog to the private matters of this story. I state without the temptation of detaining myself elsewhere, that our friends are lodged in an hotel near the General Post-Office, that the elder Mr. Lansdale has left again for Coketown, allowing his family still an unlimited holiday at Richmond and that everybody tries to make the most of his visit and its opportunities. The Grahams went to the Crystal Palace on several succeeding days, paying their allotted tribute of attention to this fund of the worlds

wonder and admiration. Ethel and Richard discoursed sagely on the objects of antiquity, or mediaeval fame or modern industry, Maud extolled the general arrangement and excited herself about such features of the Exhibition as the huge crowd of people or, if the party was joined by the Lansdale ladies, about minor, perhaps frivolous details. We must not forget though that Miss Ansted would at a moments notice be ready to take a scientific view of the case and that Anne, concurring with entire good humour in Richards denominating her occasionally a chit, was in every respect to be preferred to Lloyd Graham, who surveyed with undaunted stoicism not only the ground-plan of the Exhibition but of London, altogether, if he was called upon to do so.

Now I have come to a very interesting point of these visits to the glittering Palace of Fortune to many speculating industrials; I have worked myself through the tumult of cabs and equipages, through the thronging multitude in the lofty halls, calling the sky to help in the effect of their transparent vaults — to meet again the lovely railway acquaintance Diana. Who can expect to behold again the companion of a few hours journey, the vis-a-vis of a passing conversation? Richard Lansdale, the fortunate, won that rare accident for himself. With Ethel at his side he walked towards a glassstand containing some zoological monstruities, when he suddenly came upon the young lady of the sweet voice, leaning on the arm of a handsome young man. She recognized him on the instant, greeting him with a candid look from her blue eyes and a slight bend of her pretty head. She did not remark Miss Graham, nor did Ethel remark her, for her eyes were drawn to some other part of their manifold surroundings; the lovers stood before the stuffed monsters now and the fresh little beauty was lost behind them in the throng.

It was an interesting moment so far as it set Richard

musing in an entirely new line. He attached some importance to this chance acquisition to the number of persons he knew. He wandered in his interest to the young man who acted as Dianas cavalier; whether he could be the young creatures husband or if he might be the girls brother. Diana had looked more lady-like to-day than on the occasion of their first encounter, more selfcontained perhaps in being seen in her right position, under the care of her natural protector. Having appeared thus once again, every possibility there was that this meteor might yet again sweep his horizon quite possible, and what of that? Are such casualties worth pondering upon so long?

After another week, Richard set aside one day for his own particular disposal, wanting to take a survey of those sections of London life, which harmonized only with his peculiar taste or concern and woild never be sought by the other explorers of his party. It being his pleasure to perform something extraordinary and return to his ladies with an imposing report of himself in the obscure regions never trodden by the idle perambulator of the queen of cities, he directed his steps down beyond the London Bridge, towards the Docks, through a labyrinth of miserable houses belonging to the parish of St. Georges in the East. He looked on many an emaciated, darkvisaged form, loitering about as if expecting something or awaiting the right moment for an occult purpose, he met women who kept their eyes sullenly on the ground they walked on with hasty or weary step, women who stared him scrutinizingly in the face, boys who were too morose to be mischievous, men who hated him perhaps in the transient encounter for his easy gait and his faultless toilet. He stood and gazed on the restless, impatient toil in the Docks, the free, unurged spectator of the heaving struggle of men, bent under the weight of bales and goods, whose shoulders had once maybe been as unacquainted with the heavy loads of life as

Richards own. When one stands thus, light and idle, before the living picture of the hard and relentless battle for existence, wondering how that ponderous chest does never break the spine that bears it, speculating how the niggardly loan can equivalence the strength spent in this toil for the daily bread, one comes to feel as if one would slink away ashamed, the unemployed from the striving, merciless activity, the inquisitive observer from the real hungry stage of Earth. All the actors stretch forth their hands and cry: bread, bread to live, and we only stepped in upon them on a promenade. — Yet all this does not apply to young Mr. Lansdale, I bethink myself; he stands with grave, meditative mien, slowly swinging round and round the walking-stick he had judged well to take with him on so extensive an excursion and brooding out great conceptions in his mind. At last, grave still, as behoves an earnest, thinking man, he turned from the suggestive scene and groped his way back through the mercantile confusion. There are more features of London Dock life than the man earning insufficient subsistence by a true sufficiency of work — there are the supernumerary contenders for the actual portion of employment, lingering near the entrance to the mornings hope, which cruelly denied them the few pence for dinner and maybe for the nights lodging-house. Well it knows the blessing of occupation, well it gazes with sinister envy on the former object of our compassion, on the burdened day-labourer, this melancholy set, and counts the hours lazily rolling over the streets — to nothing. There is an interminable gradation of mercenary eyes, looking one to the other above it, envying rank and luxury, envying comfort and livelihood, envying poverty and misery, for being a scale lower yet. That sneaking figure, stealing off with a wicked design in its face, gives a parting glance of envious meaning to his neighbour, who still holds out and can afford to hold out by reason of

greater possibility of perseverance or stronger firmness of natural disposition. We are among the most common passions of humanity, lashed to reckless openness and supremacy by circumstances, by despair and by unfathomable wrongs. Richard singled out some of these listless, objectless creatures, who had given up their chances for the day, to a degree tired already of his lowering surroundings and the dirty bleakness of this strange sphere, particularly as he was alone, when suddenly his glance fell on one person from among the rest. It was a long, lank man, with a rosily pale face and hair singularly like sheep's wool upon his head. A recollection struck him of Allan Grahams description of Mr. Rosens assaulter in Liverpool, who was distinguished by this latter peculiarity. A sudden zeal rushed over Richard, which I cannot call entirely the impulse of a thoroughly good man, eager to fasten on the subject of suspicion and be the means of bringing it to justice. It was the vanity of the huntsman taking aim at a stray game running into his path. Richard did not understand this. As quick as it had sprung up he checked the wild idea of apprehending the man, who in this place and in his destitute appearance might or might not be the malevolent one of the seaport town, but he considered upon addressing some words to him. "You look as though you were in want of something" he accosted the stranger, stepping up very near to him. The face that turned round half surprised at this interpellation, was not calculated to assist Richards suspicions. It showed a pair of honestlooking blue eyes, a broad open brow — the mouth, leaning to that amplitude verging upon coarseness could not impair the goodnatured and confidence-inspiring total of its upper part. The general impression of the physiognomy was insipid, if anything, but not without redeem in its details.

"I want everything" curtly replied the labourer, muster-

ing his interlocutor with a candid survey from head to foot.

„You have no work, it appears.”

„No, and not a shilling to spend.”

„So you want a shilling in the first instance, I suppose.”

Instead of an immediate answer, the man quickly cried out: „Take care, sir, you are in the way of the porter with the big trunk.”

Richard turned round to see in what sort of danger he was placed, and smiled at discovering the indicated personage on rather an independent track from his own position. On bringing his head round again to face once more the stranger, the stranger was gone. Gone as if he had been swallowed by the earth. Assuring himself that there remained no vestige of his where-abouts he mused half satisfied, half disappointedly: „I was not far wrong, it seems. That was bad for my man to leave the conversation at the point of the shilling. I'm sorry now that I couldn't handcuff him.”

Getting as well as he might over the disappointing end of this adventure, Mr. Lansdale betook himself without demur back to aristocratic London, reflecting that this last little event was the only thing worthy of his days enterprise. He should have taken somebody with him, let us say Mr. Graham, and the tour might have done, but with his own ideas shut up and no new suggestions keeping him active, he would rather have had the metropolitan wretchedness described to him in a book, than put his foot into its mire. Not for this did Richard join his party, he continued his solitary studies in Piccadilly and Grosvenor Square. He breathed the perfumed air of the bowers of nobility, he revelled in the light beaming on light grey stone fronts of supercilious mansions, he trod the pavement all but golden, made for the feet stepping over to family-

carriages and broughams. Very proper for philosophers and humanists to handle the machinery of contrast.

Having appointed the day to his private uses our voyager was loth to resign a particle of his privileges and adding the evening to his furlough what more plausible than revert to the theatres for a pastime. He disdained St. James' and the Olympic, he could not imagine any attraction possible on the stages royal and renowned. „I'll ask Graham if he knows of a cheap play-house; he ought to indeed.” Nothing so common as the fashionable stages for Richard Lansdale. Make acquaintance with the honest little theatres mentioned by Miss Diana in the train. A person of social reformatory aims should pass over no suggestion thrown out to him. In fact he went to Ethel's father and fetched his information. He invited Mr. Robert to the theatre named, knowing that the gentleman had an awful throror of the tediousness of dramatic performances and would on all accounts decline the offer. The little stage whereto he referred his future kinsman lay in a convenient position of course, not far from the central veins of the town, and had issued programmes just for to-day for such a popular representation, that, „considering the hour” he said with the relish of patenting the excellence of his protégée, „my dear Dick, I fear they may have no tickets left.”

Richard tried that and actually found a modest crowd assembled before the ticket box. Having a great averseness against the vulgar press, he remained contemplatively behind the group, awaiting perhaps that the ticket should fly of its own accord into the hand of such a lucky creature as himself. Suddenly, before he well knew it, his eye alighted on the same man towards whom he had made advances in the morning. He was pushing out of the people around, and skirting the crowd with hasty step he disappeared at the corner of a neighboring thoroughfare. There was just enough zest in the affair to make Richard

follow him with unwanted celerity and without preliminary deliberation round the corner to which he had taken.

At the point of the sharp turning however, a mishap befell our hero: he ran full force against a person coming up with approximate velocity from the other street. Richards agility was disabled for a moment by the poignant vexation of having proved rude to a lady. He gave up his chase when he became aware that this lady was Diana. The little creature took the accident in very good part, but she did not pay much attention to the gentlemans profuse excuses and ejaculations, because the purse she had held in her hand had fallen to the ground and discharged its contents in circumference by dint of the concussion.

Richard was quick in stooping down and picking together the scattered pence and shillings that belonged to the glittering toy already recovered by its owners hand. She said: „Thank you” for every couple of pieces he handed her, in that sweet bewitching voice of hers, looking down on him with a meek smile, but when he made the fourth delivery of copper she broke out: „But where is the note? Oh sir, don’t you see the note?”

„What note, young lady? Here’s only copper coin and a very little silver. Count it, if you please, if that is all, for I don’t see any more.”

„Oh, sir, oh, and of all things my note is gone. A five pound note. Can it be lost? I don’t see it here. Is it flown away a little farther? I cannot lose it, I dare not lose it. You must see it somewhere, sir; do, do me the favor and look.”

She held her little hands against her temples and stared at the pavement with a blank, helpless gaze, poor child. Richard made a farstretched inspection of their surroundings with the preconceived certainty that wind and man together had made away with it in good time, while they had been grovelling on the ground for pence. „Was not

your first look for the note?" he asked the girl, returning to her from a fruitless search. "Is it lost?" she demanded subduedly, instead of reply.

"Where could it turn up from yet" he answered, adding afterwards his former question.

The girl looked stunned at Richards giving up the recovery of the disappeared document; her regret was so piteous to behold that a deep sympathy shook the young mans breast — and he the cause of it! She leant against the wall and wound the string of her purse nervously through her fingers She seemed to have forgotten Mr. Lansdales presence in the absorbing embarrassment of her secret cares, his expressions of condolence and concern passed her ears unheeded. He could not leave the poor little thing thus and yet he had exhausted his store of conventionalities.

"This loos seems to inconvenience you to a high degree," he said, in his attempts to rouse her. "I should be very much vexed to lose a fivepound note, but I would forget it by and by."

"Yes, the money is not to you what it is to me. You do not know how I have got it and how I was going to employ it There is such a different value in a sum according to circumstances."

"In justice it would be my obligation to restore you this note, as it has disappeared through my agency," Richard cautiously sounded his ground. "How shall I forgive myself remembering your pitiful face — you look pitiful, my dear young lady."

A sudden emotion flashed over the face which she uplifted at his last remark. "Would you restore it to me for a day, sir, only for a day?" she inquired quickly. "Because I was on the point of using it and would be so sorry, oh so unutterably sorry to be compelled to a delay in that?"

„I would restore you a fortune if I could, and without terms and restrictions,” he responded rashly. „Command my pocket-book, miss,” taking it out and opening it. He generally was provided with a prodigal stock of ready money, in London, above all.

Miss Diana unexpectedly drew back before his eagerness. A penetrating look scanned Richards physiognomy — let those lovely eyes fasten on ones face; though their meaning be not what might be wished, it is a delight to have those clear blue orbs mirrored in ones own. „Perhaps you do not respect me,” she said to him, „I have heard that men are most ready to give money to women when they do not esteem them. I am placed in an extraordinary position and I see no wrong in extraordinary conventions, because you once have spoken very nicely to me, sir, but your manner, my ignorance makes me afraid; I must get through it by myself; I won’t venture on mistakes.”

She smoothed and arranged her attire while making this sally and at the end of it she inclined her head in a parting salute, distancing the amazed Richard already by a few swift steps. He regained her side however with no less alacrity and pleaded with her: „Do allow me your confidence, do not regard me as a stranger after I felt impelled to offer myself as your friend on our first meeting on the railroad to London. Do you understand how you offend me when you impeach me with such miserable unreliability as not to honour your trust and friendship!”

„You must think me an odd girl. We encounter each other just at the most queer conjunctures.”

„Give me leave to think you an odd girl, an exception from the rule that is bound hand and foot in monotony. For people not fettered by it themselves, the exception is a relief. Make a pleasant face, miss, and swallow this remedy against the embarrassments which I am grieved to observe beset your path closely.” He tried to end his

urgings in a jest, which had grown so warm in the course of discussion, much warmer than Ethel might have found occasion for, though Dianas evident troubles might have touched her.

„Don't believe that I have so many embarrassments,” put in the girl, as if a little piqued, „it's only accident. Accidents are always against one.”

„Not against our meeting again — you did not believe in that on our joint tour.”

Remembering the impropriety of prolonging too much his tête-a-tête in the street with this strange woman, seeing her yielding besides to his easy offer of assistance, Mr. Lansdale thrust the friendly loan upon the young creature and hurried on an equally easy leave-taking. „We cannot consider ourselves any more as strangers, should our ways yet come together once again” he said; „if the features of our acquaintance do not come up to the general usage: honny soit qui mal y pense! Good bye young lady of the name of Diana.”

He paused an instant, watching her face after this concluding allusion; something like a shadow passed into her variable eyes, she drooped her lids and said furtively: „Good bye sir; thank you for releasing me to do what I intended with my bank-note.”

He lifted his hat as she turned from him and his taste revelled in her gait, which might suggest her having wings on her feet as she swept the corner leading to the theatre. Richard did not move from the station he had occupied during the interview and when he set himself in motion it was in the opposite direction. This time he was not curious to pursue the steps of his chance-friend, or he had a weighty reason not to show it. „A suspicious creature,” he murmured to himself, „no, a mysterious one. Very probably she was ashamed to divulge her name to-day — little shy and saucy Diana. Oh heaven, how sincerely I

wish that she have drawn on my purse with an honest intention; only for a day she reiterated a thousand times, yet how will she give it back to me, not being acquainted with my name or address or anything? In London there are people of every description — pshaw — am I sullying those rosebud-lips with a base mistrust? She is not light-minded; there is a confidence, that is inspired and received by a look, by an action, and that subtle affinity has been at work between her and me. She forgot the unpracticality of repaying the loan — or she believes in the destiny that leads us together when she needs me." Mr. Lansdale thought all this very complacently; he approved of the moral intensity of his desire that there might lurk no low trickery on the young lady's application to his purse; having got over that point, he indulged in a secret encomium of his confidence-inspiring presence; thirdly he regaled himself with a mild fantasy of entering upon the office of a protector and friend to this, who knows, neglected and illtrained girl — she called herself a girl! Lastly, oh Ethel, Ethel, woe to you and mercy on your dreams — lastly Richard Lansdale made a merit to himself of returning to your image and saluting it with intact and faithful fervour.

The stay of the Grahams in London was drawing to its close. Every day was carefully planned out to yield as much of London sight-seeing yet as was achievable, foremost of all to the advantage of Maud who had fewer similar chances in prospect than Richard often privately insinuated that her elder sister possessed. Happily from that point of view therefore that it was not Maud, but Ethel, who lost several of the last pleasure days through a violent attack of toothache, that benumbed her nerves to indifference towards all conceivable enjoyments. Her lover induced his sister Anne, who need not economize her holiday time, to keep the sufferer as much company as

possible, so that Maud might have less cause to interrupt the proposed concluding enterprises with Lloyd, which would have been against Ethels urgent protestation and against her own highwrought enthusiasm. Nor was Miss Ansted behind in showing herself amiable to her nephews fiancée. As the toothache however is an evil not much to be improved by accompaniment, Ethels betrothed saw less of her at this period than he else would have done and aired his compassion for her in the streets. Sometimes he assisted as chapeau d'honneur in the general excursions, sometimes, when he was very important and interesting, he set out at random to try and fall upon the trace of Mr. Rosens assaulters, whom his auditory was left to believe vanished in the precincts of the Docks.

He did not fall though on the vestiges of the man with the hair of sheep's wool, nor on any other trace either; probably his time was hanging heavily on his hands without the society of Miss Graham and the metropolitan amusements were shut up to him with that fact. He walked about as restlessly as any young wooer may who had not got up his courage yet for a declaration, he gave many a penny out of a purse fabricated by his love to the abundant beggars, felt very sedate and mild — and every coin in the purse and every note in the pocket-book was a forget-me-not of Diana.

Thus he walked through the Strand on the day before the Liverpool party's departure, stopped at Simm's luxurious dining-rooms and ordered a plate of soup to give a momentary object to his fluctuating spirits. It is a great relief, when labouring with harassing anxieties or simple ennui to be for a few minutes taken up with the disposal of a tasty dish. Not the prig but the sage must testify of that. Mr. Lansdale sat down by a table at the window, played a little with his spoon because the soup was hot and mused that the nearest chance of recovering his

fivepound-note was ending to-morrow. He was very anxious about that banknote; I can never be deceived into supposing that it was on account of its monetary worth, but as much as he was curious to know if it would be restituted to him at all, as much he was tickled to learn in what manner.

Being occupied with the thought of Diana, helped him in an emergency he was little on the point of expecting. It assisted him to identify at once the old man, who had entered at the door of the eating saloon and looking around him for a moment made straight for Mr. Lansdales table. The unprepossessing person who had received his charming railway-acquaintance on the platform of Euston Station.

„By your leave sir,” said the man, sulkily lifting his hat across the table with the plate of mock-turtle, „are you Mr. Richards, sir?”

„Not Mr. Richards, sir, but the person you want, I have no doubt. Do your come from Miss Cooper, sir?” asked Richard, chuckling inwardly at his quick wit.

The brazen face of the ill-favoured attendant remained impenetrable, „Not from any Miss Cooper” he answered, seeming to be in the habit of accompanying about every third word with a frown. „I come from my mistress, who wants to return a loan of five pounds into your hands. That’s all, sir. Here they are.”

Frowning deeper than ever, he look a paper roll, evidently containing five golden sovereigns, from his coatpocket and laid it before Richard. As convinced as the gentleman was that the errander would effect a precipitate escape, as eager was he to counteract him to the best of his efforts.

„I wonder how you have found me out” Richard brought to bear on his man the first detaining remark.

„Ah!” was the rejoinder with a subterranean laugh.

„Your mistress pointed me out to you, I suppose.”

„So you suppose, your honour.”

„I hope your mistress is well and in good spirits.”

„I will tell her so.”

„Oh, I will give you a small message back to her: my thanks, and that I would like to know if she had not inconvenienced herself. You are a person of confidence in her house, I assume?”

„I'm not in her confidence, sir. Couldn't you put your message on a piece of paper, that she sees that all is right? That's smaller favour I ask, than she has accepted from you.”

Richard began to fancy that he had incurred the latent animosity of this man; at all events the latter was of no use to him as he obviously was well cautioned for the case and was not plagued with the common endangerers of discretion: susceptibility of understanding and politeness. After one or two more lingering attempts he resigned the wish of approaching nearer to Diana through this ugly agent of hers, yet he had been mistaken in the supposition that he would be in a hurry to withdraw himself from his inquisition. He was bold enough to brave it out quietly. After having frowningly pocketed a liberal gratification from Richard he slowly retired through the saloon, a cold-blooded object of admiration to the waiters. Richard opened the little paper packet and looked at the glowing coins nestling in it, so neat, so bright. „A lady's gift” he said smiling to himself — he put the pounds into his waistcoat pocket and the envelope paper, though it contained no scrap of writing, into his pocket-book. There was a slip of paper in his note-book with a rapidly written entrance, specifying the number of the bank-note he had lent to his young friend. He looked at it, introducing the other piece and tore it into shreds. „Our business is finished,” he said, not with a sigh, but with a mien reminding one of a sigh. „A fairy, with a hobgoblin for

her servant. Yes, a fairy of the London streets. I hope she has not the gift of reading thought, for I believe I have had and shall have a deal of mistaken fancies about her. Grant me three wishes, is that not a fairy's common task?" —

Chapter X.

Seabreezes.

When the Grahams packed their trunks for Liverpool on the morning of the next day, Richard was requested by a letter from his father to prolong his stay in London yet a little, in order that he might accompany his family home at the expiration of a fortnight. Thus the good son took a heartrending adieu from his lady-love, whose toothache had just subsided for the day of packing up and remained at his own leisure in the capital. The alluring freshness had forsaken the glorious attractions of the grand city, Richard sought a casual pastime or was compelled to seek it as the cavalier of his aunt and sister, to relieve the hospitable duties of the Lees from Richmond, but his personal inclinations pointed rather the way of a detective officer than to that of a pleasure-hunter. Although I know he will not like to have it divulged, I confess that my hero is on the track of Miss Diana. He has seen her again. He has her now before him, some way up the street, plainly dressed, but with the grace that may be inborn to any station of life, with a delicate little, silken-haired pet of a dog running by her side. She takes a great delight in the dog, she turns towards him at every step and speaks to him.

Children are so fond of animals, and she has much of a child in her composition. The innocent playfulness with

the dog could bewitch any stranger who watched her. There are few people in this street. Richard, becoming aware of Missy in one of the better streets, while he was standing at the counter of a cigarshop, wavered between the temptation of walking up after her and speaking to her or pursuing the unconscious prey of his curiosity and finding out the goal of its walks. It seems that he has ascertained to a plausible degree the ways his fairy frequents. His operations are fixed to a radius. He sought for Diana in the vicinity of the theatre pointed out by Robert Graham —: the beacon of his pursuit leads back to it to day for the second time. Richard would be very much ashamed to be discovered by her on his enterprise, yet he wants to hear her voice well as she chats with the dog. Diana's voice!

"You are going home, Dash, my pet. Do you like it, or do you yet prefer to walk? Dashy, you naughty, ugly, obnoxious beast, you sweet little horrid darling, are you going to soil my dress with your dirty, dirty paws? Keep off now! I won't kiss your ugly snub nose any more if there's one spot on my summer dress. I declare there is, Dash." She stood still for a moment, to inspect her dress, as might be argued from behind, then she walked on as merrily as ever.

"Oh you little dear, what now?" asked Diana, lifting the dog into her arms with a display of fondness not unreturned by the pretty animal, that wagged its bushy tail and whimpered after its own canine fashion. The girl stopped before a house and knocked. While waiting to have the door opened, she turned round so as to face the side of the street by which her pursuer was approaching. Richard finding himself at the door of a grocers shop plunged into the doorway effectually evading her glance. As by good luck he would have been obliged to knock on the counter to summon the proprietor of the establish-

ment, the unwary intruder was spared the trouble of imagining any requisite in the grocery line, which he might bring forward as a pretext for entering. Having taken this note about the interior of his refuge from his station on its threshold, he peeped round the corner of the door-frame to assure himself that Diana had disappeared. Then he stepped out breathing freely again with the view of investigating more minutely her place of abode I have signified already that Richard found himself in but a mediocre neighbourhood, yet still in a clean and decent quarter; besides, the house in questin took its range among the better dwellings of the street. While he was taking a survey of the one-storied brick edifice, looking at its number, its general appearance and the white window-curtains, arguing well for the tidyness of its inhabitants, staring up at the whole from the brink of the pavement, as if he had an order from somebody to paint it, what should meet his calmly scanning eye but Dianas glittering little star, spying out of an upper window, her bonnet and mantle removed, her chin resting on the soft head of Dash. She perceived at once the shadow of her footsteps — Richard was sure that she blushed and more sure that she retired precipitately, only so far into the room as she might think necessary for her safety, for he discerned the tip of her white forehead and a fluttering wave of golden hair stationary in the same direction after the opening encounter. Whatever Diana may have done, Richard blushed at the position in which he had put himself and his vexation sounded an incontinent retreat. It was but a sorry joke to have his young lady, probably standing on tiptoe, watching him with dirision, or discomfiture or scorn. Making sport of him to the dog, no doubt. Seeing a foolish interest in him, which had no reason to be, which would prejudice the off-hand candour of their relations with her.

Yet on the next day Mr. Lansdale ventured with all precaution into the proximity of Dianas house. No dangerous head was at the windows, the house divulged nothing of its inward life, with the door shut more persistently than many a mouth and not an inadvertant wink in any of its respectable glasspanes. It was less amusing for any length of time to watch Dianas dwelling than Diana herself, so Richard threw up the business after half and hours loitering about and a circuit of the irregular quadrangle of buildings that brought him back to the locked door without vouchsafing a reward for his perseverance. Still when a man once takes a business in hand he does not like to leave it halfway in the realization of its promise, he resigns an un lucrative post, but he does not give it up without any profit at all, if he can help it. Richards shadow continued to hover on the sunlit pavements leading up to the door where he had no business. Whether he saw Diana or Diana saw him on any of these repeated occasions lies hidden in the breast of both. Time was lost very unsatisfactorily by this means at all events, for the knowledge of Dianas concerns did not advance worth mentioning, as ensues from the following fact. Happening to be near that particular door again, one forenoon, Richard beheld a person issuing from it, a womans form, though not Dianas He followed her to the adjacent grocery shop of his accidental acquaintance ship, bethinking himself that he might be in want of a pocketful of biscuits in default of any other possible purchase occuring to his brain. He joined the inmate of Dianas house at the homely counter of the shop; she proved to be a woman between fourty and fifty years of age, between a housekeeper and a cook in social range, between resolute and inane in the expression of her face. The grocers wife was serving the customers. That good dame, much impressed by the appearance of a tip-top

swell in her humbler realm, forsook the preceding visitor on the instant of his entrance in the middle of a bargain, asking after his orders. The first opportunity for opening a friendly understanding. „Please, do not let me supplant your old customers, ma'am, allow me to wait while I give the preference to yonder good lady.”

The good lady took not the shadow of a notice of this polite insinuation, like a stone idol planted before the counter she stood, looking with large, steady eyes at the shelves on the wall in that upward direction affected by objectless starers.

„She won't mind, sir,” replied the grocers wife.

„But I should. No person is quite indifferent to the unnecessary loss be it only of a minute, is it not so, ma'am?” persisted Richard, addressing himself with a smile to his dumb fellow-customer. The latter did not deign a reply, not even the twitch of a muscle to show that she was conscious of her rudeness. The flurried grocers wife hereupon contorted her eyebrows in a manner ingeniously suggestive of something being wrong with the woman, until having finished the sale of a pound of riceflower in a strange silence, she dismissed the customer with a bend of the head accompanied by a droll, significant look.

„Oh sir,” she then turned to Richard, „I never have the courage to speak freely before a deaf person. It's too much against habit to talk of people under their noses. But it was too queer hearing you attempt to converse with Janet Hobbs. You must excuse me, but she could no more answer you than this bottle of porter. She's deaf and dumb sir.”

„Is she indeed? Then I should like to have looked better at her. Everybody knows it in this neighbourhood, of course?”

„As far as you may count that, of a certainty, sir. She's very handy, considering, often out upon errands —”

„Poor creature, what sort of a home does she have? In a family, where she is kindly taken care of?”

„She's the single servant of Mr. Colston, doing all the hard work of the house. Kindly treated?. Well, rather left alone, I should say, but that's sometimes just as well. Mr. Colston, Hubert Colstons father, you know.”

„My dear lady, if you fancy that you help me with describing Janet Hobbs master as the father of Hubert Colston, you presume on my ignorance. Who is Hubert Colston, pray?”

„The young man who made such a noise at Watsons Theatre in the next street. Such a tenorvoice they say, as should make the fortune of the Italian Opera. There's somebody I dont recollect the name of, has taken him with him to Manchester to do a job there. I don't care for singers, he's a roystering, arrogant will o'the wisp, is Hubert Colston. If his father makes a cross face, I don't see why he shouldn't because of his son.”

„An only one? An only child?”

„Oh no, Mr Colston has daughters, flighty things, taking to singing after their brother. No more sons, no. The household rests on that poor-witted creatures shoulders, whom you have seen just now. The daughters don't attend to it; they're always abroad. Formerly Mr. Colston kept a servant girl to assist Janet, but she and the poor gentleman are easily cheated and after two or three disgusts he gave it up in a fit of rage. So there's only Janet to attend to everything in the daytime, for Mr. Colston generally comes in late. Queer people, these deaf and dumb ones the deal they are able to manage when they have the will. I often say, Mr. Colston himself might be deaf and dumb as well, for anything that he were more entertaining or nearer to approach than Janet. He's such

a taciturn man; if he could keep his door shut upon everybody, I say, he would do it."

"Keep it shut in the face of his daughters among the rest?"

"They're all day long away from home, as it is. When the Colstons are making money among them, it's the most they do, they are making no comfort and doing no good to other people, that I'm sure of." Another customer entering in the course of her chat, the grocers wife only widened so much farther the radius of her conversation, appealing to the new comer for corroboration of the intelligence she advanced. Richard manifested some curiosity, artistical in its nature, of course, about Mr. Hubert Colston.

"Now I have an idea that I met him unwittingly one of these days hereabout —" forgive him the white lie — "walking with one of sisters. A handsome young man who struck me rather. Is he handsome and his sisters also?"

"There are people who always find something in a man with a tenorvoice. I don't. His sisters handsome? Lord bless me if anybody will say that of them. Sandy-coloured creatures all of them."

With all deference to the opinions of the grocers wife, Richard did not put much value on her judgment about the Colstons, because she seemed to an extent prejudiced against the family.

A censorious matron of a grocers lady may be purblind to the graces of a coquettish, giddy maiden, which the sharper eye of male youth would find only too visible. Diana was one of Mr. Colstons emancipated daughters, in defiance of that opposing vote. Neither was the young man Richard had met in her company in the Exhibition, sandy coloured, though he could not have exactly specified the actual hue of his hair. Yet after vanquishing the first

divergence of the dames deposition, he found it light enough to get over the difficulty of the second.

„Do you think, Mrs. Pudger" the grocers wife addressed her last customer, „that the Misses Colston will ever meet the man who will call them handsome?"

„There's much in dress and fame, which is what they are aspiring to and maybe they are meeting him already, Mrs. Morris," was the reply of the cunning-looking woman taking her leave with this verdict and a toss of the head.

Mrs. Morris opened her eyes wide of a sudden, turned them upon Richard and fastened them there with a rather too unreserved scrutiny. Richard seeing plainly the drift given to her thoughts by Mrs. Pudgers insinuation, as promptly lost his temper at the idea of having talked with imprudent candor, and did the worst he could do: threw his money on the counter and took an abrupt leave with a curt good day.

What a deal he had talked may be seen in the bag of information he brought away with him along with the unprecedented biscuits. He knew all about the household arrangements of Dianas assumed father, details which fitted pretty well into his experience of the young lady. He had learned that the doorstep of the Colstons was not easily passed and the daughters of the house not easily found behind it. For that supposed family relic, that held itself to the service of Diana, the bearer of the sovereigns, he found no room there. The christian names of the Misses Colston and their usual places of resort he had still hoped to sound, when the womans malapertness disturbed him.

He had heard nothing to the praise of her he was approaching by this indirect course, yet that fact constituted the least part of the deficiencies of his success. He was not the slave of the voluble Morris' opinion. But the great step he believed to have taken against the secrecy wherein

Diana pleased to envelope herself as yet, should he not doom it to be the last of its class?

I grasp the hand of everybody who may hitherto have done us the favour to share our interest in the fugitive charmer Diana, for at this point, I think she ought to vanish from our stage. Richard, tickled by the magic power of mystery set up around herself by the ill-advised girl from the railway-passage, followed the desire of detection as a piece of iron follows the magnet, by the unreasoning force of attraction. He comes upon revealment to day, after the preluding ascertainment of Dianas home, in the form of the ample and all but sufficient communication from the grocers wife. He looks into the life she probably leards as clealy as one can look into any of a not quite intimate acquaintance; the comprehensible zest to obtain a general insight into a matter withheld from him has its point broken by fulfilment; to ask for more details would argue of an impertinent and unmanly curiosity. Mr. Lansdale may laugh in his sleeve when he confronts Diana again somewhere anxious to evade identification, because his conclusions are drawn fixedly and undoubtingly. He pauses a moment at a hitch in his calculations: how shall he suit together the surname of Colston he has heard to day and that other of Cooper, which he understood from the old servant at his arrival in London? Can Colston and Cooper be mistaken for each other? Well, they are not so dissimilate as seriously to disturb the bulk of his arguments, though he would have sworn to the name of Cooper an hour before if it had fitted pleasantly. Richard felt a deep disgust at being frivously taxed with an amourous interest in one of the Miss Colstons by the two forward women of the neighbourhood of the discovered house — as well he might indeed! — so he was in all the better spirits for writing a love letter to Ethel Graham that evening. With a real

relief he turned to the clear, true and cordial relations of his engagement. The lover becomes sensible perhaps of having wasted his leisurehours unprofitably, he overlooks with a slight vexation his latter days employment in London, which has kept him back from more reputable pursuits and estranged him from his former line of thought. — Sink back into the London fogs, Diana, there is freshness in the winds of Liverpool and disburdening of tiredness in its rain.

Meanwhile Mr. Lloyd Graham, having done his friendly duty as a brother, afterwards planned a kindness as a husband. He was resolved to procure his wife a seaside holiday to be enjoyed in the fair autumn weather in quite a different way from the summers dissipation which he granted his sisters. One of the girls was invited again to accompany Gwendoline with her baby boys — the lot falling upon Ethel in the end, for three reasons, which Mrs. Lloyd expounded in the following plausible manner: „You know, my dear, in case that Lloyd should take me on a trip again next year, I won't have you to go with me as now. Besides, you are so much more of a support with the little children, than Maud. I should never be easy with Maud relieving me occasionally in taking charge of the children. And she didn't lose a week in London with the toothache; she has amused herself enormously.”

They had hit upon Hoylake as the end of the excursion; at that period a quiet, unpretending place, which ostentated no obvious charm to the eye of a chance - visitor but for its very quiet and solitude had been deemed by Lloyd a suitable resort of recreation for delicate Gwendoline. Hoylake advanced a desolation of sandy and dusty highway towards the stranger, jogging up to it by the coach from Chester, making a stiff attempt at hospitality in the form of a prim hotel, presiding over the straggling houses of the principal street. No indice of the border of Wales

peeping into Cheshire over the river Dee, no marine grandness rolling towards the northern shore, was gained from this point. Gwendoline exchanged rather a rueful look with Ethel, when Lloyd had ordered dinner in the hotel and set out with them in quest of lodgings. These were found accommodately enough however and honest Mr. Graham felt entirely satisfied with his arrangements, when he rumbled back to his business in Liverpool next morning, leaving his dear ones to enjoy themselves. The ladies soon found this easier than they argued from their first impression at arrival, for there were the sands, a vast fund of delight to Master Richard as equally to his sedate elders, there were the meadows behind the houses and a lovely walk by the river, bordered by blackberry-bushes, whose full ripe fruit savoured of the proximity of Wales. The genuine healthy charm of a summer or autumn holiday consists in the unconstrained revelling in nature. Do they know the advantages any pleasure retreat affords, those who are studying the toilettes on the promenades, inclusive their own, who meet and conform themselves to a fashionable company, carrying its love of decorum, its notions of appearances into its retirement from more exuberant vanities — society prying into their book on the sands, into their plate at dinner, into their humour in the evening? Who dares to dig through and through the sand at twenty one years of age with ones little nephews merry girlish nurse, as Ethel Graham did, before a host of formal strollers-by? Who would go a blackberrying in good earnest, with a company dress on, sticking the incongruous gloves into the bodice of some diaphanous tissue or silken finery much too heavy for anything but majestic display? Have they breathed freedom, have they rested from the toils of society, those who follow in the retinue of the solemn court of justice of fashionable critics, removing to the seaside for a change of air?

Ethel, Mrs Lloyd, the nurse and the babies made a blithe set of children in their first Hoylake week, for anything that the grown-up people distinguished themselves from the small ones in their roving delight. Not a spot of care clouded the days expanding happiness, their lungs replete with sea-and hay-scented air, their hearts drinking in full draughts the exhilarating beauty of the country, their youthful fondness extolling the boys' healthy chubbiness and on their townward horizon the dear ones that would wait for them placidly for a month. On the windowsill of their little lodging house lies a row of white sea-shells, the room looks bright with daisies from the meadows. They went in the morning a little way down the rivers bank and Dicky said he was going to procure himself an angle for fishing salmon. In the afternoon he forgot the plan however, for the party was deep in a field then among the soft rich hay and the proud towering haystacks. The sun was shining as if it never could have the heart to do otherwise and thus too smiled the beaming light in Ethels ordinarily so demure eyes.

In this state of things Richard sought his love in Hoylake after his return from London, hurrying to the renewed meeting with a moderate sentimentalists flattering ardor. He came up unawares in the coach, was informed where to find the ladies and went through the common at the back of their tenement out upon the sands, where he did not delay in descrying their white figures upon the wetted ground. He saw Ethel digging with all her might into a mound of sand, Gwendoline the while throwing shells and other marine objects which Dicky brought her, into the waves for their joint amusement.

I know what thing Richard Lansdale would have preferred to the actual testimony of his eyes before him. He would have wished to see the approach of his, the lovers footstep, betrayed to Ethel by an occult, sympathetic instinct

of love, feeling the inaudible, detecting the invisible. But he was far from the mark in this fancy. An exultant peal of laughter struck on his ear, in Ethel's voice: digging from both sides through the loose wall, she and Bertie's nurse had met and peeped at each other through the opening produced, which result was greeted by Miss Graham so enthusiastically Richard thought with resentment, as if she had dug out him from the sand. Oh, so desperately merry as they were, all of them, they could not be merrier by any possibility.

By and by the visitor made known his presence. With a cry of pleasure Ethel discovered him, and having assumed very quick and easy manners in their temporary rusticity, the ladies, without more ado, set to tell him of all their tiny adventures and open-air experiences. Ethel made no fuss about that fortnights separation, as Richard had anticipated. She was full of the Hoylake glee. He had been prepared to make a fuss about it himself, responsive to her having missed him immensely, but to his dismay there were no dreadful symptoms of that, so he withheld his own accordingly. That interesting feature of love, when the stricken one becomes void of taste for the pursuits and enjoyments of sensible creatures and sticks persistently to a one-sided gratification of feeling until she is oversatiated, was deficient in Ethel. There being no cause for care and repining, only a generous present and a promising future, Miss Graham could afford to dive into a book without seeing Richard always capering on the pages, to be glad of being smiled at by anybody, without grumbling that it was not Richards smile, to serve her friends, without affectedly indicating that it was her foremost duty and pleasure to serve her future husband. There are people with such graces, and if they don't get enough of them themselves in good time, it can't be helped when other persons cannot digest them in the long run.

Only one gratifying inquiry was vouchsafed to Richard by his refractory love, she was in a decent anxiety to inform herself of how long Richard might mean to extend his afternoons visit to their retreat. He signified in reply that he intended in the first instance to stop over the next Sunday. Ethel actually clapped her hands for joy — she was quite degenerated in her rare liveliness. More kindred to Maud in her unrepressed mirth. Richard has no insight into Ethels state of heart, as Ethel has not into Richards mind. They have not the perspicacy opportunity and lapse of time grants to us.

For the first time after the completion of her postulates for happiness Ethel was placed in a serene scene of relaxation and simple enjoyment with her wonderful dream of love latent in her heart. Though she did not know that the latter was all the more a constituent of the beauty of that epoch, for not being in danger of contradiction by the reality of Richards presence, she experienced that it sufficed to make a hitherto untasted paradise out of the pleasant surroundings of a rural holiday. The unutterable contentment of her soul could spend itself in free air, with childish innocence her sanguine mind fearlessly added to-morrows prospects to the presents security of bliss and her recognition of the bounties of life flowed unrestrained as it never yet could for the premature fancies of her vernal age.

And Richard took offence at his betrotheds capacity for glee in his absence, not understanding, — ah, never comprehending how impossible his absence had long become to her soul. It was ridiculous in more than one sense to the outward beholder, his displeasure at Ethels demeanour among the sandhills of Hoylake, for it meant the very thing he wanted that should be. His love tuned the wild exultance of her laugh, the overwhelming harmony of her 'spirits, the accords she struck from the chances of her situation.

Immediately upon the young mans advent, Ethel was usurped by Richard — no more playing with Berties nurse; no more enterprising strayings on the sand by herself, no more deeply confidential chat with her tender sister-in-law. Richard preferred the riverside to the seaside; he ciceroned the party to some green bank, threw himself upon the ground in some shaded spot, and regulated his position nicely to the seat Miss Graham chose among the perfumed herbs and the sturdy flowers of harvest-tide. They had books with them as a rule, but they only talked, toying with the volumes in their hands or read a chapter to exchange their ideas about it soon afterwards. Whatever much the impartial critic may be determined to detract from Richard Lansdales merits, he must admit the brilliancy of his intelligence, the cultured affability of his deportment. He discoursed in a manner worth listening to on a subject worth talking of, he had a sense of the aesthetic, which governed favourably his facility of learning and preserved it from running its objects into triviality. With regard to his mental gifts he could probably compete with Miss Grahams confident fancies; the mind is generally more public than the heart. Richards heart — does it not yield what many of us can but afford to offer our neighbour?

Of all sweet things in the love-making time, what is more pleasant than to have the couple placed into the relation of teacher and disciple? When one of the two has possession of some interesting science or art and imparts it to the other gently, easily, young Amor getting a neutral board to dance on, lofty enough for his dainty feet, uncompulsory enough for his giddy temper.

Richard, with his quick comprehension being also a good linguist, could easily possess himself of several languages and had latterly been encouraged by Mr. Rosen to appropriate to himself the use of the German idiom. Con-

sequently he was able to sit in these Hoylake days under the blackberry-bushes, with some dictionary and conversational volumes at his elbow, giving Ethel desultory tastes of his study. He had already gained some insight into the spirit of his new acquirement, flashing it fortuitously before Ethels eyes.

"It's a ponderous language," he remarked, "heavy, deep, interesting. More regulated than ours, my dear, and having ascertained its notions of pronunciation, one is set going with that better than in English. But it asks rather much in the way of pronunciation. There's a close consanguinity between us English and Germans in the roots, but we have grown somewhat deflectively out of them. We have accepted latin ingredients too; where the Germans do that they don't legally recognize the adopted children. Perhaps we didn't either once, but in time all the items of nationality become knitted together out of the whole universe — and what's the harm of it, I pray? I note that all patriots of sages have the folly of twisting out their own particular language as the most perfect upon earth. Nothing can equal German in force and purity, nothing Italian in melodiousness, nothing French in elegance and grace, you must know, Ethel, what they have said of our native tongue. All is true to a degree, yet I would concede to none of them the precedence. No one can speak as concisely and to the point as we can, I never found such prime hits in other languages, so practical for common life and vigorously current for poetry too. Now German is well to labour with in science, to compound abstract nominations for abstruse empiric conceptions brought to light by a philosophers teeming brain, of vast consequence to the world, although his special imaginative property at the beginning. It's more solid than the southern languages, though these are more ingratiating in sound and more subtle on the tongue. Ethel, there is nothing in the con-

quest of languages like the pleasure of comparing them, proving their characteristics and perceiving their euphonic skill. Of what a delightful workmanship is this instrument we use carelessly every day to communicate our thoughts, quite worthy to bear the message of our holiest emotions, my love."

He looked into the eyes of his bride-to-be, as he concluded his harangue and the look spoke more than the commended language. It said that they stood together upon one of the highest elevations on the ground of their attachment and their bond. In the next hour, Mr. Lansdale brought forth a proposition of another species. He had sat in silence for the space of ten minutes, listlessly fingering the pages of a dictionary lying by his side on the grass, when he turned to his companion, saying: "My dear, I think I shall do honour to the season and shoot a few rabbits for our table when I come next time."

"No" said Ethel lightly, "with your resources for recreation and pastime, you won't take to the poor amusement of rabbit-shooting."

"It is not a poor amusement, Ethel. It's a glorious thing to roam through the fields in the fresh morning, with all ones senses awake watching the little grayish dots slipping in and out from cover and a nice couple of pointers making the business savage. The love of the hunt is the love of nature, are there those among the uninitiated who believe that the hunting passion is the coarse greed of prey? We would not hunt game in the Crystal Palace though we had room enough. Hunting is the strongest smack of nature that ever offers to a man of refined bringing-up. Movement, air, unbounded, bright surroundings, the blood stirred up into a healthy excitement that invigorates the brain dulled by an excess of artificial application. The gallant emotions of our character crown the physical benefit, ambition, courage, honour —"

„Courage for rabbit-shooting!"

„Speaking of the hunt in general, my sweetest. Dexterity, nimbleness, agility in the small chase, patience, steadiness of purpose. I have received the compliment already of being called a good shot."

„I am sorry you brought yourself into the way of that appellation. When an emptybrained country-squire or a callous blasé has no better incitement left than the taste of slaughter, very well, but when a fullhearted, refined young man like you, Richard, will turn from the peace and poetry of this lovely landscape, from the inspiration of noble lore to plead for the cruelty of wanton bloodshed — go, I don't understand it."

„I have just told you, that the more the mind engages in art and science, the more it needs the relaxation of a return to nature. Our poets are on my side of the question, they do not detach poetry and highmindedness from the hunt. Listen to Scott:

„My child, the chase I follow far,
T'is mimickry of noble war."

„So it is, never was truer word said. And the similitude with war shall be the recommendation of the hunt? Oh Richard, you don't know how selfish it sounds what you have said on the subject. Let the rabbits and the foxes and the deer put the case — —"

„My love, this is untenable sensitiveness. Allow the sheep to put their case when we want the mutton to eat."

„Let necessity be taken seriously, but don't put necessities, which one scarcely dares to think through in the light of an amusement. There are soldiers who cry for war in the same blind restlessness. Richard, my love, having once seen it as I do, you can't pursue such a cruel pleasure. You are above those to whom I would forgive it. If you want to rest your mind, and can't do it suffi-

ciently walking with us in this beautiful harvest time, -you must resort to bowling, or cricket, or boating, or anything that does not disturb any living being while we are so happy, oh so happy, that we perhaps grow restless from over-happiness, instead of grateful enough to God."

"Bowling or boating, ha," muttered Richard with contempt. "Wait till I lay the rabbit at my liege lady's feet."

Chapter XI.

Secret Misgivings.

For several days young Mr. Lansdale was very diligent in Mr. Rosens office. He worked away to good purpose at his desk, being very quick at a thing if he once applied himself to it and stole only one sunny afternoon to give himself and his noble gray a ride to Childwall Abbey. For the Sunday he was going over to Hoylake again, of course. On the Saturday intending to snatch a visit at Mrs. Grahams before leaving with the train for Chester, he was walking through Lord Street after the early close of business, when he came upon Winifred Rosen and the Osborne ladies, who had been shopping in Compton-House. Miss Rosen was always fain to exchange a word with her fathers handsome volunteer. The violet-blue eyes did no more delude her as to their meaning, yet I fear she still lost herself in their depths sometimes.

While she talked to Mr. Lansdale, those eyes suddenly turned aside, he bowed to a lady who swept Winifreds skirt and after that only reassumed the conversation with an absent minded expression in his face.

Like a haunting ghost the figure of Diana was again ahead of Richard, the London girl transported as by enchantment to the Liverpool streets. She came from the

same direction as the Rosens ladies, saluted Richard frankly as she passed him and then crossed over to the other side of the street.

Richard felt somehow as if he were falling into the snares of witchcraft. Why does that face rise before me wherever I go he cried impatiently, after having made his adieu to the ladies. „What in all the world can have brought her to our town, when I believed to have left her behind with the rest of all Cockneys? Are we caught together in a trap by fate, I wonder, while we believe ourselves free as the birds, Diana? She was not stunned at seeing me, I've told her already that I belong to Liverpool, I suppose. I shall grow to hate that face by and by."

If that proved true, Fate would have a bit of trouble to keep the two together in its trap, I think, for Fate, like many things of its kind, depends only from human spirit to be made master or vassal often.

The Sunday in Hoylake somehow passed moodily, without the animation that could have been expected. Ethel, looking back at it on going to bed mused that Richards visit had yielded but a too meagre reminiscence. Early on the Monday morning the lover strove back to Liverpool. He had to wait yet half an hour for the starting of the coach near the inn, which he might as well have lounged away at the breakfast-table.

Richards urgent duty in Liverpool was to find out whether Miss Diana had made her appearance there with any plea of naturalness and acceptable inducement. He wanted to solve that question, though considered strictly, it did not concern him. Lucky that he had fallen on the idea of the fairy, for if it be fairy-time or not, the year of grace 1851, he could exculpate himself with being spell-bound when his conscience took him to task for his sterile whim. „I suppose I must follow the chance

that leads me" says the man of the nineteenth century, when it is convenient to him to recognize the supremacy of a spiritual power where his reason is too unwilling or lazy to make a choice.

Fate was very active at its play. Richard haunted not in vain the thoroughfares leading up to Compton House at certain hours. Dianas way lay through Lord Street, branching off at a bystreet more into the heart of the town and was lost at a corner, where her pursuer on coming up, found every vestige of her effaced. Always the same streets and always a standstill at the same corner. Richards cautious distance from his object was too great to allow of his ascertaining into which house she disappeared round this turning. After two or three tiresome experiments, Richard diminished this distance until he was excessively close upon her. They were still some way off the fatal edge of the corner-house. Of a sudden, without the least warning, the young lady turned full round upon the unlucky follower and faced him with a look of mingled reproach and guilelessness in her eyes.

"Why are you always following me, sir?" she asked.
"Wouldn't you generally deem it uncivil to follow a lady in the streets?"

Richard stood dumbfounded by this blunt interrogation. By a heroic effort however he recovered his assurance and answered as candidly as he had been addressed: „Pray, pardon my impertinence, but having begun to take a friendly interest in you, I was led on by my amazement at finding you unexpectedly a fellow-citizen of mine. I had not dreamt of the possibility of again meeting you out of London, Miss Colston.”

„You have followed me every time for three succeeding afternoons.”

„My dear Miss Colston ---.”

"Why do you call me Miss Colston, sir. my name is Diana Rowe."

Well, by all the pagan gods, here we have Diana owning to a surname at last, and an entirely new one. The third proposed for her, in fact. "Young lady, I was led to believe by other persons, that your name was Colston. Excuse my error. Excuse me again if I inquire whether you do not belong to the family of Colston?"

"I might have belonged to it, but I do not now" was the ambiguous reply. "I have removed with my father to Liverpool and we have settled here for good. Being alone with him, I mean with no further family, I must take care a little for myself. I should be ashamed to come up to my fathers door with yourself at my heels, as — as — I saw — —."

She faltered, but he did not fail to understand her allusion to the discovery of himself as a spy before the house of the Colstons in London. His blood made a rush at the seat of his amiable temper and overthrew it. For three times the girl observed him in the humiliating position of a spy and only at the fourth she warned him with that aggravating openness.

"I suppose you have but settled it in your mind today that I was following you" he said with cold emphasis, "as you reprehend my procedure only on the fourth opportunity."

"Is it only an accident?" she asked with alacrity, lifting her blue eyes to his. "You see one would not like to connect such procedure with oneself while the idea admits of an error. Now is it a mistake? I believed not. Then I would rather have made it against you than against any other person, against a stranger. That's my consolation. Do overlook it, please. Good afternoon, sir."

As it seemed to Richard, almost without his coadjuvance her slender little hand touched his deprecatively and she

was gone. The flurried figure, the face blushing confusedly in the apprehension of having made a disagreeable blunder towards a gentleman retired in disordered retreat. Richard fell to reflecting what phrases he might have addressed to Diana, in case this interview had been premeditated, in case the young girl had given him leisure to draw his moves. Whether it was amusing or disappointing, whether they were at arms or friendly, it was a piquant affair. Diana made him delightfully sensible of his natural wit, which he needed at full force to compete with her artless defence against inquisition. Nor could the seductiveness of her beauty be altogether denied by Mr. Lansdale, who engaged to Ethel Graham, ought to have been as good as a married man. His mind, deficient in the firmness as yet, which constitutes manhood's safest fundamental, was unhinged by the unguarded meetings with a woman, who inaugurated a rival current in his thoughts besides the pure associations of his avowed attachment.

His old courtship suddenly languished in its charm, there seemed no zest, no life in it. Should his most inciting hours belong to the riverbank of Hoylake, was he quite willing to recognize Ethel as the queen of his heart, handling all the prerogatives of that power? Ethel meant to govern him in several respects. What prospect more horrid than to fall under the tutelage of a wife, or to have to battle with it? — A woman raising herself under the influence of his love, a woman grateful and subservient to his illustrious mind, a woman frail and fair like a flower to his buttonhole, ah! — —

Ethel Graham was his equal, felt herself his equal, not with pride let us say, but a severe selfconsciousness, which constituted a vital part of her religious character. If Richard was her equal she would uphold a steady exchange of moral influence, standing unflinchingly by his side as the good angel of his deeds, as the warder of his straying

impulses. She would receive back from him what she gave, the holy staff of righteousness as the eternal essence of their married existence. If Richard was her inferior — dare we put the case? — she would assert her superiority on every important occasion, with the stern duty of her convictions.

But Richard did not fancy such a determined equality even, as he experienced in his betrothed. Ethel's love of him retains its worth, but a man like Mr. Lansdale may indulge in being loved by more women than one. The sweet, unobtrusive affection of a being, who did not question her inferiority to the lords and masters of creation might gain his spontaneous love. Was there something in the words of Diana that hinted vaguely at his having captivated her virginal heart?

In a reckless spirit Richard went over to Hoylake on the day following his encounter with Diana. He sought the antidote to Dianas antidutiful entrainment of his thoughts in the presence of his promised wife. At the same time he proceeded to set an example about the independence of his position. Contrary to Ethel's admonition he persisted on his rabbit-shooting plan and after a morning out laid a couple of dead rabbits at the feet of his lady-love. An unmitigated astonishment clouded the brow of the receiver.

"Did you think I jested the other day?" she asked him.

"I thought your sentiments too fanciful for reality. I am not going to render myself ridiculous by becoming a party to my sweet girl's romanticism. I chide you as but a sad British subject for objecting to the sport."

"You will not be less of an Englishman for surrendering that caprice, which I would not demand from you as a loving favor, but as a mark of your taste and judgment."

"Ask it of me as a favor, my love. Still you must not tie me down for ever with a thesis so out of common-sense."

But Ethel would not ask it as a favor. When the rabbits were served on Gwendoline's dinner-table at the cottage, Ethel refused to take a morsel of them. "I will not taste the rabbits Richard has shot," she said. The difficulty between the lovers was growing to be a protracted one. Richard inclined to take the proposition too lightly, Ethel was at the opposite extreme. The worst was, that there wanted something in Richards tone to smooth matters, there failed the warmth in his rejoinders which hitherto had always testified to his anxiety of arriving at a solution in some casual contention. The chill of indifference shivered through their misunderstanding.

"You have hurt poor Ethel," remonstrated Gwendoline in a confidential moment with her brother. "How could you do it, and persist upon going out shooting afterwards, seeing how seriously she takes it?"

"I may uphold a sensible thing against her, may I not? Ethel wants to have her will and I want to have mine."

There certainly is no more harm in rabbit-shooting than in shooting a few thousand men for the sake of some national ambition. Nations may therefore sympathize with Richard Lansdale when he puts himself on his defence against the encroachment of the like dictatorial rigor upon his hearth.

The days of Hoylake ended not so fairly as they had begun. Liverpool was not as gravely content as when the Graham party started for the London exhibition, not as gaily enlivened as before Mrs. Lloyd crossed the Mersey for green Cheshire. It was the rabbit no more that stood between Richard Lansdale and Ethel Graham, it was something else, imperceptible almost to the nearest looker-on, a something that was in everything and prisoned it. Never touched myself by the celebrated inspiration called

love, I do not fathom by what secret intuition Ethel learned that her lover's devotion to her was cooling, notwithstanding that he maintained all his affability, yes, his fervor of manner. There were times when he was more amiable than in the bloom of their courtship, there were hours when an eloquent dejection of his spirits made way to a touching smile when she came near him.

He knew it himself how interesting he was. He battled for the honor of his word against a new passion creeping up to his thoughts slowly, ingratiatingly, he clung to his promise with that grasping resolution which estranged it farther from his real desire than anything else could have done. His memory was intoxicated by the image of the London girl so arch and winning. A strange stimulant to his easygoing, pampered life, oversatiated with hereditary success, the chase of Diana, the graceful, pleading roe. Ah, to be free to follow up that pursuit, to run wild with all the hazards into which her dodging tricks might lure him! To hear a whisper in the enchanting voice, that would flatter his self-love and warrant perennial sovereignty to his vanity.

Never was Richard so conscious of his virtue than when he desperately stood upon resistance against this temptation surging in his brain.

The senses of Ethel, growing more acute in proportion as she gained upon the first involuntary conception of suspicion groped sadly after the origin of the actual but indefinable change. While her wooer secretly prided himself on his professions of constancy, Ethel's heart sank softly, but incessantly, towards the zero of Richards fidelity.

She had never admitted to herself yet that she doubted his loyalty. Her experience rested as yet too much upon feeling than upon fact, to find the form even for the open question to Richard what the change might mean. Only

silently in her breast it seemed as if her blood were perpetually running cold.

This secret misery which began to harass the firm and sincere girl must soon set its marks that betrayed it in the home, whose beloved and cherished daughter she was. It was an anxiety, a sorrow, which none of them would dare as yet to give existence to in words; but while Ethel quested for a soothing unprejudicedness in their mien, Mrs. Graham was oppressed by a dark presentiment of evil and Allans habitual gravity deepened under the same shadow perceived by his mother. Maud was the last to whom the boding truth revealed itself in this hushed manner. All the family knew it in the end, as they knew the early tale of Ethels love. But Mauds lighter spirit broke through the toils which the diffidence of her elders had tacitly spread before the dim augury of coming events.

November was at the door with its hard face, winter was lowering behind and in the spring the wedding was to be. Ah, to take a leap from here to May, Maud thought, as a good expedient, have the wedding to-morrow morning and be happy for ever afterwards. — Allan had just come in from the city; it was a moment auspicious for confidence, for Mrs. Graham had stepped over with Ethel to Gwendolines, whose youngest child was taken ill. They were delaying a little yet.

„Brother“ Maud addressed her companion, „I am afraid of saying so to mamma, but I am uneasy about Ethel.“

„So our mother is, longer since than yourself, most certain,“ replied Allan, turning abruptly from the window where he had stood whistling to the canary and walking up and down the room with hasty strides during the ensuing conversation. „Our mother will always be the first to notice a thing of this kind. But the less there is said about it, the better, until now.“

„But Allan, what may be upsetting Ethel so?“

Giddy Maud almost cowered before the menacing passion in Allans face when he answered her: „It may be that Richard Lansdale has altered his fancy, it may be that Richard Lansdale has been deceiving her.” He spoke his opinion in a dry hard voice, choosing brevity of sentence in the sombre fierceness of disdain.

„Why do you suppose that, Allan?”

„Because that is generally the thing which comes to break an undisturbed engagement. When something begins to be wanting between the two lovers at this period, it will be the love that Richard has sworn to my sister” In the stress upon the words, my sister’ lay the key to that suppressed wildness roused at the supposition of having her happiness placed in the hands of a betrayer. The unutterable contempt for the man approachable by such a suspicion even capable of working an irreparable gap in the round of their circle.

Maud made a pause, stunned by this direct exposition, this merciless, unflinching candor of wrath, then she said: „I wonder how you can have formed such positive combinations about a subject which I scarcely expected you to have regarded.”

The shapeless something, which even Maud had found out!

The girl upon becoming aware that she shared her discovery with all the rest of the family, began to muse more anxiously on the vagueness of her misgivings.

„You have no palpable reason, no foundation for putting this wretched possibility?”

„Take my word for it, Maud, Richards happiness does not depend like Ethels upon this engagement.”

„No, not to that degree,” assented the girl with conviction. „The love of Richard is a part of Ethels whole life. Richard has never loved her like that.”

The absolute certainty of this asseveration, contained in

Mauds tone while making this remark, struck her brother in his turn. He arrested his steps before her, saying: "Ethel has hoped for something like it, my dear."

"But she would be surprised to hear of something that happened a few months ago."

There may be a listener to this dialogue, who does not know herself to be a listener, who is only waiting strainedly for the prepared revelation, unquestionably arrested by a word of doom catching her ear as she passed. Maybe that nobody stirs in the house as yet, but possible also that a figure turned to stone is standing behind the unguarded doorway, without a reflection upon what she is doing, without a thought but of what the brother and sister are speaking in the parlour, too forgetful by this time of well insuring their solitude.

"Ere Richard proposed to Ethel, he proposed to me, only a few weeks before. I was going to tell you at the time, but you would not listen to me. I was determined to keep that a secret from sister and mamma, because it would occasion them unnecessary disturbance."

"He proposed to both of you within a few weeks! That is fickle mindedness indeed."

"Why, I led him to the idea of Ethel in fact. Let me confess it all to you —"

"No!" suddenly burst out an unnatural, acrid voice behind Maud. Ethel stood in the room with strange wild eyes, grasping convulsively the back of a chair, her lithe stature erect, imposing and repellent in the gesture of unrepressed anger.

"Say no more, Maud. You have abetted the deception which I incurred while I never doubted in being Richards only love."

Allan was silenced by the shock of Ethels unexpected appearance, but Mauds composure was more quickly restored.

„Dearest sister,” she said, going up to her with the eagerness incumbent upon her anxiety about Ethel’s feelings, „neither have I ever doubted that you were Richards only love — nor do I doubt it at this hour. But is it not sure that young men occasionally take nonsense into their heads, that some wanton folly takes them out of their true course and is best overlooked and forgotten before it causes a misfortune? Richard had not well made up his mind when he spoke to me, it signifies nothing, surely nothing, my dear, dear sis.”

„I won’t have other young mans ways quoted for my judgment of Richards behaviour. In all the rest of young men I have not sought what I wanted to find in Richard. I never dreamt of asking after other fancies of his and now neither he nor my sister have informed me, have esteemed it their duty to inform me that I am the second in the offer of his love. The spell of my dreams is broken, he may meet another candidate for the vacant place in his heart still.”

„But Ethel, this is such a simple thing. Richard has not reached so early such an extraordinary maturity of opinion as you did, he did not consider thoroughly when he first fell on the idea of marriage. As your sister he might like me well enough, you see. His eyes opening by and by, all must come right, for there must be a destiny to link your love and his together, your attachment is too fixed, too fated. His is not the fault in withholding from your knowledge the introductory mistake, I made that stipulation to avoid trouble.”

At this juncture, Mrs. Graham entered upon her childrens painful discussion. She found the long-reserved theme growing into overwhelming proportions and endeavoured to regulate wisely her mothers influential position towards it. Allan, with less circumspection, was not sparing in bitter references to the comportment of Ethel’s lover,

Maud nervously trying to twist her novel evidence into gentle shapes and Ethel herself, the centre of that family group, bewildered by the vision that showed her castle in the air, her youths ideal shattered and rent by an unprophesied stroke.

„My daughter, don't allow your future to be overthrown because of a venial shortcoming in the fulfilment of your wishes. You wanted Richard to respond with equal singleness of mind to your lifelong fancy: this is a poetry of conception too exalted for reality maybe. A promise to Maud bound him not to mention to you his former decision, which, let us assume, was but a trifling factor in his thoughts soon afterwards, when he began to understand the drift of his fate. When he loves you truly now, that bygone story, Ethel, ought not to be permitted to cause a disturbance between you.”

„That bygone story assails my trust in his love now, even if, I could overcome the shock of losing that standing in Richards preference, which I had calculated upon according to my own emotions.”

She must steady that trust once more by stronger means than our reasoning away her disquietude,” Allan said sternly.

„Ethels ease of mind is in jeopardy.”

After a lengthened conversation the family repaired at the customary hour to the dinner-table. Their meal being disposed of in a hasty and morose way, Allan engaged his sister Maud for an evening walk, in order to leave Ethel alone with her mother. Richard was not yet making his appearance — perhaps he was going to omit his call to-night, perhaps he was only late. Latterly his visits had neither been too early nor inviolably regular.

„When Richard comes you will allow me to speak to him alone for half an hour, will you not, mamma?” Ethel said, after a pause in her earnest converse with Mrs. Graham. Not long after her having made this solicitation,

Richards knock was heard at the door. Ethels sentence stopped on her lips, paralysed at the familiar sound. A foreboding of sorrow to follow shivered through her frame. When Mr. Lansdale entered the parlor he found her alone, with no evidence of having interrupted that close communion with her mother a few minutes before.

„Richard” said Miss Graham, in answer to her lovers salutation „I have begged mamma just now to leave me in order to say a few words to you privately, which concern me very much.”

Chapter XII.

The Talk in the Parlor.

Richard looked uneasily at Ethels grave calm face. Was the young lady going to read him a lesson, as she was given to doing, or something worse? What was worse? What might be worse than hearing his ladys prim precepts? His face grew grave too, secret thoughts took lurking attitudes behind his smooth white forehead, the beautiful eyes bent their gaze with hard inquiry upon the features of his promised wife.

Ethel was not weakly embarrassed to find her words.

„I want to tell you, that I have acquired an intelligence this afternoon, which I did not reckon upon hitherto. I have become aware that you inaugurated our present engagement after having been rejected by my younger sister a short time before.” Her phrases were pronounced slowly and clearly with a singular unwieldy stiffness in their construction. Richards excitement, ensuing after this introduction, took an opposite form. He spoke hastily and rashly. His first answer was a quick, scornful laugh. „So that girl Maud, who almost asked me with both her

hands uplifted to keep that foolish scene a secret, has come out with it of her own accord! What hopeless childishness, my dear."

"My sister Maud has not at this unseasonable time divulged to me the facts which she thought would tend to dim my happiness. I would have preferred to be informed of them at the time of my accepting the proposal of your hand, because I would then have been in a better frame of mind to meet their exigencies. They demand of me to renounce the dearest dream of my life, the fancy, that destiny had unwaveringly laid the ring of union upon our very cradles, Richard. As long as I can think I have loved you, dear, and I have been gladder by all that you grew to be, handsome and talented, because I had the faith that it was for me more intimately than for all the world besides. When you proposed to me I believed my fancy had come true, I always believed that such fancies must come true."

"And it came near your will enough, I should say, Ethel. Have I not been kind, not been zealous, not been impassioned enough? Can you not presume now, looking back over our intercourse as a betrothed couple, that my impossible fancy for Maud is a nullity steeped in oblivion since I have penetrated into your superior mind? What are you troubling yourself with seeing rivalry in my attachment to Maud, don't you see how that can't exist?"

"You must have it in your character to make marriage proposals very lightly, when you put it as such an utter impossibility my being rivalled by the young lady who rejected the avowal of your love only in this current year. Knowing me all the time just as perfectly as you knew the sister, whom you then preferred."

Richard sprang up from his seat, frowning. "Do you mean to tax me with being untrue to you, Ethel?"

"I don't know; there has been something in your manner

since we returned from Hoylake, different from your treatment of me in the beautiful days of last summer. Richard, it may be very imperceptible, but you seemed to grow tired and colder in the marks of your affection. Your temper has become impatient of your courtship."

"I may occasionally have become a little impatient with your pedantic views and your prim principles. You have shown a proneness to correcting and supervising me, which I don't care that you should continue. I leave you to your judgment and you may leave me to mine — I am a man and need not be meddled with in every puny act, wherein we disagree. Coming to learn better all your virtues, I also hit upon an occasional drawback, which I am glad to be able of mentioning now that we have once fallen into a disagreeable conversation."

"Richard, Richard!" suddenly exclaimed Ethel in an agonized, alarmed tone, "you cannot speak to me but in that harsh, cruel manner, which you never used while you imagined that you loved me. For weeks I have longed to ask you what the change might infer. From to-day's revelation I conceive that a change in you can of a possibility portend a change in the affections and wishes of your heart. Tell me the truth, oh Richard, do you know of that coldness, wherewith you chill me? Do you know of it? Speak the truth. Are you regretting Maud sometimes yet or can you, having elected a new object for your love once, elect a new object again?"

"Is that half an hour's affair, which you have discovered, which has been disclosed to you to-day, such an enormous stumbling-block to your sentiment that you can't get over it?" cried Richard impatiently. "I do not regret Maud. I have said so already.

Do you want back your word, Ethel, which you pledged on condition of being a boy-love of mine, without the usual antecedents of a young man's final devotion? I seem

not to be able to satisfy you about that irremediable affair. If the disenchantment from your reveries is too great, do you want back your word?"

Was this the frenzied appeal of a wounded lovers despair, the sharp cut that was to tear out for ever the morbid tissue of an invalid mistrust from the healthy concord of their affiance?

I dare not hope this for the sake of Ethel Grahams peace, for too great a part has of latter days played Diana Rowe in Richards heart, to be forgotten at this critical moment. Richards heart is not whole, I fear it grasps with quick adroitness at this suitable opportunity to untie the irksome fetters, which he had not the courage to throw back upon Miss Graham of his free impulse. Holding the knot of this confidential interview, Mr. Lansdale, with the arm hanging listlessly by his side, tries to loosen it accidentally without that foolish job conqueror Alexander did, when he hewed his in twain.

All this while Ethel stood before the man she loved, with her piercing, unswerving look upon his face. People are not always obliged to cast down their eyes when they come near feeling ashamed or embarrassed, especially when their thoughts are bent upon some end or intention. Richard was resolved to seize the opportunity for disengaging himself from his pledge, the name of Diana stood in letters of gold in his brain. He eschewed the reconciliation, whereof Ethels mortally wounded passion was in quest. She felt the solution approaching and lingered over it in agonies. The shadow of a misfortune may deceive too, as the light of happiness so often does. Even love may not read the lines aright in its rulers eye.

"Tell me the truth, Richard, is there no reason why I should fear the inconsistency of your affection?"

Richard, though he was a person who sometimes might please to avoid the truth, was not a man who would belie

it in its face. At last those handsome blue orbs bent down, reflectively, before he replied with a furtive upward glance at the lady before him: „Will you marry me, Ethel, as you have promised, and take your chance with my honour and constancy?”

He knew the answer Ethel Graham would give, and his honour was saved, immaculate. It was a noble reminiscence, the recollection of this fair offer to his discarded love. „No,” said Ethel, „I dissolve our engagement, when you give no answer to my questions out of a full and open lovers heart. I do not want to marry you, I want you to love me. You should have said that when I asked you for the truth. It would have been simple and it would have been enough. All other words can not outweigh it. Mr. Lansdale, we have come to a mutual understanding.”

„I see how and why you have broken our betrothment, Miss Graham. I suppose we should not have been able to proceed with such jealousy of exactation in you. I would not have expected this a few days ago.” Well could Mr. Lansdale now assume the air of injured innocence, well could he throw upon Ethel the blame and entire responsibility of the broken vow. The lucky Richard issued loftily out of every dilemma of his life.

That emotionless acceptance of her renunciation sounded the death-knell of Ethels last lingering hope. Maybe for a moment she had beguiled herself yet with an illusion that her words would strike flame in her ex-betrothed's slackened ardour, that the formula of dimission would be the readjustment of their promise.

At this parting moment between Richard Lansdale and the girl whose love he had cast away, her brother Allan returned from his walk with Maud. Having no idea about the closeted conference in the parlor, young Mr. Graham unhesitatingly threw open the door of the chamber and

beheld its two inmates standing yet in the same attitude which they had assumed during the course of their interview. Both looked towards him, startled out of the onerous task of closing their preceding dialogue with a finishing sentence, comprehending their last unreserved communication.

„Allan, I have just broken my engagement with Mr. Lansdale,” his sister addressed him — there was no token of emotion in her tone, only the sense of the quiet spare words.

The young man who loved Ethel Graham with a deep inborn affection, as old as her whole life, knew where that other young man had stabbed her soul, might she receive the thrust as she would. His lips twitched when he replied, flashing a sinister look upon the selfpossessed young dandy to whom this hour was nothing but a momentary awkward situation.

„I am sorry that there was cause to dissolve your engagement. But I am glad that you have broken it. You are on the point of saying good bye to Mr. Lansdale, I assume?”

„I was just searching for the farewell that I ought to give the man, to whom I once believed that my whole life was to belong.”

„Better let your brother discharge it to him, who would not value your sentiments, my dear.” Allan confronted Richard like the avenger of his levity. When a favourite plant of our garden has been torn by an importune hand, and we find its tended sprigs left to wither under the burning sun, its fairest blossoms scattered on the ground to fade ignominiously, then of this aimless wantonness we may stand accuser before the perpetrator, in the helplessness of not being able to mend the wrong, with the shadow of that indignation raging in Allan Grahams breast. „Let me bid you good-bye, Mr. Lansdale. With the possibility of breaking the trothplight of love, there comes the

desirability of it. When you have asked a girl to consider her life given to you, to lay her soul bare to you, to trust to you as the nearest of her kin, when you have promised honestly to return all this to her, promised to make the indissoluble vow of marriage and prompt that understanding to be retracted — —."

„My good fellow, don't conclude that harangue. Though some men would not like to say so, I point out to you that your sister has dismissed me, I did not renounce her.”

„You will not blind me with the sound of words. I know how far my sister is from being unfaithful to you. I know what species of a reason she must have, to remove her devotion from your unworthy disposal. You don't deceive me as to how you have asked for love without knowing what it is and leave it without knowing what it is, to take up a new plaything no doubt, that may or may not become a mutilated, stunted life upon your hands. When a man meets love as has been yours and appropriates it, then he is a disgraceful perjurer, who does not recognize the weight of a mans word, when he resigns the promise of the future. I have never held you so high in my estimation as — —.”

The speaker was interrupted by his sisters hand upon his arm. She had not the power for many words, but she said what she wanted to say. Ethel Graham would always be strong enough for that, against the prevalence of fortunes blows raining in upon her.

„Allan, you have called yourself Richard Lansdales friend, have you not?”

„I believed that he was to be my brother, and as a brother I kept on good terms with him. I called him my friend, for your sake; I would always have befriended him, for your sake.”

„Say that you will always be his friend from hence, my brother.”

„No, nothing is farther from my intention.”

„Don't refuse, Allan.”

„My dear, if you are in earnest, you crave something impossible.”

„That is according to how you accept the sense of the word 'friend'. With this word you only take upon yourself the duty which is a Christians obligation and the consent to associate with Mr. Lansdale, which will be pleaded for by the force of circumstances. You have no need to deny me. Mr. Lansdales conduct has been apparently honourable, or I would not ask you to be his friend. I wish that there may also come to be the warmth of friendship between you. Promise, if you are still willing to do something for my sake.”

„Ethel, I cannot imagine why you insist thus upon this extraordinary promise.”

„I want you to be his friend because I fear you to be his enemy,” said Ethel, disclosing the ominousness of Allans passionate character in her emphatical sentence. „For the love between us and my love for Richard Lansdale, do as I bid you. Never shall you say, Richard, that a lack in my love has parted us. I have confided all to you up to this day, and I am not ashamed of your taking that trust with you. May you feel ashamed of it or not, for you should have considered better whether I suited you, or waited longer to ascertain it, before uttering the binding words that grew obnoxious in a few months. Your promise, Allan, your promise, for life.”

„Well, take the hand, which would sooner give you a blow than press yours in amity. Will you obey Ethel as I do, shall we be friends?”

Though Richard Lansdale was the taller of the two, it almost seemed as if Allan Graham were looking down on him as he stood before his sisters former lover, scornfully offering his hand. The young prodigal, shaken a little by

the parting vindication of Miss Grahams sentiments, grasped at anything that led away from that dismal topic, at any of the concessions one is so ready to make, while one withholds the main one — he grasped at Allan Grahams hand.

It was significant for the natures of the two young men, the thoughtlessness wherewith Mr. Lansdale touched the palm, which closed so grudgingly upon his fingers. The readiness of the one fell as a feather upon the balance of hesitation of the other. Thus Allans words of animosity were forgotten in the pledge of a cold, uncordial friendship.

The curtain falls upon the act of Ethels youthful happiness and hope. This is an epoch whose scenes she will glean together and call it the past. With new views and expectations she enters upon an existence she has never contemplated during the period that has closed. Broad rents infringe upon her future course from the vanquished catastrophe, but she will walk evenly on. She is not a woman to sink under her disappointment; the outward world will never be admitted to the confidence of her heart — whether she repudiates the memory of her untrue beloved one, whether she laments her early error, whether she has forgiven that cruel declaration in her mothers parlor. Only one thing is sure, unsubversive as the rocks: that Richard Lansdale still possesses Ethel Grahams love.

On the Sunday following the breaking-off of his engagement with Miss Graham, Richard went to the same church he had been in the habit of visiting with his fiancées family. He had been informed that the latter would repair on that day to uncle Clares divine service. Being pleased to assume a very unconcerned air about his fracas it suited him also not to interrupt his former habits and to take his place in the early afternoon service, which people

had never observed him to miss under the superintendence of the Grahams, although he might be suspected at an anterior time to have skipped his Sabbath orisons sometimes.

The preacher was excellent, his voice thundered through the vaultings of the church as if no sinner could dare to lift his face to his and as if all righteous souls must awaken at his bidding. Richard was a favourer of strong elocution, no ecclesiastic had hitherto been more capable of edifying him than this one.

At the same time, though I have made the preceding statement in most sacred earnest, Mr. Lansdale had, during his last two or three visits to these sermons, found his attention drawn towards a female figure among the congregation, squeezed into a dusky corner of the pews, with her head humbly bent forward, so as to make that figure terminate into nothing more explicit than bonnet and bonnet adornments. The parson had pocketed the papers containing his improving exhortation, the strains of the organ, angel-voice of our places of worship, rolled through the solemn building, breaking their aerial waves against the superb pillars, the assembly of faithfules dissolved and cleared out of the antique, imposing masonry. The crowd is thickening under the portal, then it begins to thin, then the last stragglers make a solitary item under its arch, then it conveys a perspective of the street animated by the church-goers dispersing to their homes. Yet Richard has not risen from his seat during all these proceedings. Is he wrapt in the echoes of the sermon or in the recollection of the other Sunday hours he had passed in this place?

Only now the female figure leaves her pew, near to the entrance door, and sallies forth. Only then Richard Lansdale rises and with two or three steps overtakes the womans lingering pace. Under the shadow of the portal, with the nipping air fluctuating in between them, the two

are standing, and it is revealed, why that dusky shape drew Richard Lansdale away from his attention to the divine service. With the last reverberation of the anthem behind him, upon the threshold hallowed to heavenly devotion, Richard has all his thoughts riveted on the beauty of Diana Rowe, the lovely tempter of his life. The charm that lured him away from the fondest love that ever was within the gripe of human being, the grace that consciously tests its might, unveiling itself in the cold, clear, november-afternoon-light.

Richard holds his place by Dianas side to-day. It is not a meeting casual and brisk, they are walking down the street together.

„Always alone, Miss Rowe — you are left very much to yourself, I fear. Do you not feel strange in Liverpool, your new residence?”

„Oh, I get easily accustomed to new scenes. Walking out alone does not trouble me either, living quite alone with poor dear pa, I cannot so often expect to be accompanied. Dear Mr. — ahem — ah — Mr. Richards, I should like to tell you the truth; my father is rather a queer man, he won't go to church for instance.”

„I conjectured already that your father might be a little eccentric. I wish I had a chance of knowing him, of knowing how you are made to enjoy your youth. No happiness of youth could be too bright for your bright eyes.”

„Now you are beginning to jest, sir; don't, please. I saw you in this church already, with your mother and sisters — were they not your mother and sisters? Such dear ladies, I loved to see them.”

„No, they are not. It occurs to me at this moment, that I met you the other day while detaining myself with the ladies of Mr. Rosens household. You passed by. Have you not taken up the friendship of the Rosens, being in Liverpool?”

„No, I have not. I hate the thought of going to the

Rosens. Miss Rosen is very superb and the other lady too. I hate Miss Rosen" muttered the wayward girl. Thereupon she lifted her eyes to his face with a sharp look: "You have not spoken to Mr. Rosen about me and the latter, that time?"

"No, not knowing how I could serve you, I believed I must leave the question alone."

Richard, after his return from the first London tour, had had a slight idea of approaching Mr. Rosen on the subject of his interesting acquaintance, but desisted at the outset, considering that he had but too little support whereon to found an independent investigation, while he felt no desire to generalize the story of his encounter with Diana, and that, as the latter owned to be no personal acquaintance of the German gentleman, few items of interest could be the result from that side of his resources gained in the railway conversation.

"I am glad you did" answered Diana to the young mans last explanation. "Let us leave the Rosens. I need no one, having my papa. No, I need no one" she repeated, with a low sigh. The flitting smiles which had caught Richards attention at their first meeting, were not recalled by a faint trace in this period, Diana wore a grave, almost mournful expression on her face to-day.

"I think it would be more pleasant for you if you needed one, if you made up your mind to need one."

"Yes, so it would" rejoined Miss Rowe curtly, just as if she would admit that for the sake of veracity and no more.

"I have a notion, Miss Rowe, which I can't help indulging, that your father is a grim, forbidding kind of gentleman, who has forgotten his youth as many do, unluckily for his young daughter. You fear him and you obey him, so long as obedience is not too hard upon you."

"Ah sir, — well, my father is taciturn and indeed a little gloomy. I should like to have someone who was

not taciturn to confide in as one might in a father. I am clear as to wanting that as long as I can remember."

Richard halted suddenly, all considerations about the surroundings of their interview forsook his mind — the cue had fallen from Dianas lips — he took hold unawares of her hand. „Let me be that person to you, Diana, may you not be ready to confide in me? Do you not know me by this time? Innocent, lovely girl, accept me as your protector, as your more than protector. Confide your love to me, for know that I love you since I first set eyes upon you. Let me be the person to compensate for a cheerless home to you.”

„What a good man you are! Every time we met you have been kindness itself. But how would you do what you propose now?”

„Admit my rash love for you, and my pretensions shall be realized.”

„I cannot of my own will and pleasure suddenly introduce you at my fathers house. You make me blush, sir, to lead such a conversation in the open street. How could I foresee that our topic would take such a course?”

„Then take me somewhere, where we may converse more privately, for charity's sake.”

„Would that be admissible? Should I not be to blame for it? You are perplexing me so, you are, dear good sir —.” She clasped her little hands, stopped, cast her looks about in a helpless, confused fashion. Then quickly, she laid her light hand on his arm, gave him a full broadside of her marvellous, beseeching prettiness, bending her gaze on him and said: „Must it always be wrong to trust people? I do not even know your name. I have called you Mr. Richards, but I know that you only told me your Christian name. You would tell me more of course, in case I allowed you to talk with me and you had no opportunity of doing it hitherto. You cannot

imagine how glad I would be to trust you. How I would love to trust you. I shall never have the heart to tell you. It would not justify me in the view of my father for a great venture."

"But in your estimation it would. What venture, my own dear girl?"

"To tell you where to go and speak to me. Yes, I will take you there. No harm can come of it. Mr. Richards — —"

"Drop that ridiculous Mr. Richards. Between lovers I told you quite enough with my Christian name. Call me Richard."

"Oh no. Well sir, I was not going home just now, but on an errand to a poor old woman, whom we occasionally assist. She lives in a miserable lodging and I often visit her with some gift or other or only to look after her health and wants. Poor Mrs. Rutherford would never interfere with any arrangement of mine, she is all thankfulness and no more. If her miserable apartment will not prove too mean and noisome for you, I shall introduce you to this old friend of mine. You will accompany me, I believe."

"Yes, of course I will." Richard hastened his step almost inconsiderately for his gentle companion and a good way he had to make whether more speedily or more slowly. They wended through the narrowest streets with the blackest and most damp of pavements, through bylanes that looked as if a lady should not walk them alone, through bylanes that may not be jotted down on many a map of the city of Liverpool. At last a steep, rotten staircase, the next of kin to a ladder, invited the two to test the endurance of their legs upon its knotty wood-work. After surmounting this hindrance a door, which had to be lifted in and out of position with both hands, grudgingly opened access to Mrs. Rutherford's private residence.

Nothing worse than a mouldy smell received the intruder

upon that lady's retirement, who hobbled out to greet her guests, as soon as they showed themselves in her doorway, being too deaf, according to Miss Rowes superadded account, to become aware of their stumbling approach. It was not to be regretted for the rickety furniture of this abode of poverty that there was little of it and a scanty illumination to light it up, streaming in exclusively through a halfopen door, that led to a second room, somewhat brighter than the other, by means of a dusty window probably looking upon a back court. The old woman placed the two only chairs at the disposal of her young visitors, mumbling deferential sentences all the while. Miss Rowe according to previously obtained information, it appeared, introduced her companion under the name of Mr Martin.

Chapter XIII.

A Notturno.

Time was going on very quietly, rolling forward day after day with its foot, day after day away from the unalloyed glory of hope in the history of our friends. In the even tenor of Ethel Grahams habitual avocations no faltering divulges the introduction of a lifelong disappointment into her future, no vortex of passionate confusion indicates that the brief course of her years contains a catastrophe reaching to the gates of death in its consequences.

There is one word which I have often found sadder than all the terms for sorrow, that word is, 'cheerful.' It often means an intentional brightness, resolved to take the best out of a cup that may be bitter, a benevolent effort to be sunshine for ones surroundings. Cheerfulness is not the hearts spontaneous gladness; with noble and unselfish

natures it may come in the train of a desolating misfortune, as the equilibrium of a welltrained soul. It is not a laugh, tickled by the moments mirth, it is a smile that irradiates the set cloudiness of meditation.

The form of Miss Grahams unuttered repinings over a broken wish was cheerfulness. She was such sunbeam in her mothers house as a ray of the star of day is when it streams through a stained window upon the stone slabs of a church. It takes sacredness from the place where it is seen, it warms a cold secluded spot, in its sereness beautiful, but parted from the every day-and all-the-world sun without.

It is certain that in the intimate relations subsisting between mother and daughter a full confidence respecting the latters unhappy experience was understood, but later on that topic was never reverted to again; a person somewhat removed from the hearth of the Grahams would have decided that the family was bent upon ignoring the past.

Miss Graham was proud as she was noble in the sense of duty. Proud enough effectually to hide from her faithless lover the stings he had inflicted upon her, to bear the sight of him without betraying what agonies it caused to her lacerated heart. The occasions were not so rare when she was called upon to do so and she evaded them not. For a few wecks including the Christmas festivities, young Lansdale had repaired to Coketown, shunning the Liverpool society as far as was known to his friends during the time that his intimate circle discussed the blow-up of his love-affair, and looking about him very profitably in his fathers business. Having worn off his first shamefacedness in this manner, Richard newly encountered the possibility of meeting the Grahams at his sisters house, at Mr. Rosens even and in others of his old haunts. Gwendoline at once did her best to maintain uninterrupted the friendship between the Lansdales and Grahams, which was so much

more timehonored than the brief engagement between Richard and Ethel. A very noiseless affair this latter one resulted to be after its conclusion. Childish Maud was overwhelmed with wonderment, how little difference the greatest event she could think of, was making to her sister. Grave she always had been, diligent she ever was, she showed no exaggeration in the performance of her houshold duties and no listlessness in her attention to all their former occupations. On the morning following that momentous conference in the parlor, Ethel had been the same kind, calm sister who ever presided over Mauds want of reliance. When Ethel first saw Richard again at their joint sister Gwendolines, she saluted him as she would have saluted his elder brother, Augustus Lansdale. If nothing but an eventless lapse of time had gradually washed away Ethels trust in the crowning of her love, the end of hope could not more have been lost in the dim transitions of emotion, which did not assail the healthy colour of her cheeks nor the tone of her natural sentiments.

Only her mother and her favourite brother read behind this dutiful moderation the want af genuine joy and contentment, which lay round the spot where the mercury had fallen upon the wintry zero, with no vernal augury of ever rising again.

The elder Mr. Lansdale of course made no fuss about his sons retracted engagement; as soon as fathers have not conceived an unhappy fancy for a good match, they are very cool about the person theit youthful scions are electing. Richards aunt, Miss Ansted, evinced rather an unworthy satisfaction about the breach of betrothal, leading softly round with delicate inuendoes to the theme of Winifred Rosen. Ah, me!

Richard, with all his perfections such a sad creation of conceit, indulged quite a malignant pleasure with regard to Miss Rosen. I should not like to damage him and his

repute, but: he was a male coquette. I have said it and must go on, although I have coquetry not ready made for me in the male person. He was delighted to fascinate elegant Winifred and he was immensely proud of being remote from ever attaching his desires to the rich and coveted heiress in the cotton trade. His fathers views and his aunts insinuations about George Rosens daughter blended pleasantly in his mind. Sometimes the inclination to charm was uppermost in his intercourse with her, sometimes the vanity of rejecting the prize loomed out with absolute rudeness. Good Mr. Rosen however stood entirely aloof from Richards ladies'-affairs, knowing in a general way what striplings at the middle of twenty are apt to perform in that quarter.

Richard did not sacrifice to the vulgar temptation of incriminating the fair party in his breach-of-promise case; with a show of pathetic sentiment he pleaded to drop the tender subject, professing such unaltered estimation for Miss Graham, as did honor to his rectitude. He was magnanimous in overcoming the resentment betrayed by Ethels nearest connections against her backsliding lover. He appreciated Allans displeasure, he accounted for his hotness and rose over him in the superiority of a measured temper. It suited him to insist upon the friendship of his resigned brides brother, whereof no one knew how it had been secured to him. Among all gratifications afforded by universal friendship, what friendship more gratifying to present than that which vouches for a victory over one of the most disagreeable phases of youth, a broken engagement and the familys reflections?

One day in January, when Allan dropped in at uncle Clares, who should be there, but Richard Lansdale, making up the disagreement about his folly with the kind old gentleman?

Mr. Clare was as just as he was tender in respect to

his sisters family. He would not permit partiality to make Richards case worse than any one could dissuade him from opining that it was. Richard was his dear boy yet, when the conference ended, as he had been so long. The boy spoke with laudable frankness, admitting that he had been led rather too much by a perception of Ethels love for him, without considering that his own had more the nature of a brotherly affection. „A brothers love is very great, as you see in Allan,” he added, „if only Ethel will let me yet I would be the fondest of brothers to her; oh I would that it were so, uncle Clare -- must I say, Mr. Clare again? That would be hard.”

Richard felt all that he said: such an entwining nature loves the idea of all sorts of extraordinary, beautiful alliances, such fairfaced vanity would wish for a disaster to be the chief deliverer from the subsequent ruin. Vanity is an alert little sprite, a jack of all trades for sneaking into every line of thought in a man who once is possessed of him. There is the vanity of knowing everything, the vanity of being wise enough not to want to know everything, the vanity of a handsome presence and the vanity of not caring for a handsome presence — the vanity of not being vain, a very excellent and amiable one. Richard devoutly went through every one of them, without being sensible of it and without contradicting himself. His vanity really stopped short at nothing and stretched out its hand for the whole round world with its complete inventory of foibles, interesting sins, virtues and all. He actually had got a good gripe of it. Would he leave alone Mr. Moffat, the violin player? Would he leave him undisturbed on the side of Mr. Graham, deeply offended in a mothers tenderest feelings by the truant butterfly who abandoned her daughter? No, why should he leave any man to nurse a disadvantageous opinion of him if he could help it? Mr. Moffat had liked the young mans engaging, generous

manners, he listened benignantly to his expositions, as soon as Richard took the trouble to ascend to his shabby, melancholy rooms in order to lay them before him. With all respect and deep deference to good Mrs. Graham, Alexander Moffat considered the questions of betrothal and marriage as the commonly weak side of womanhood. „You have proposed for marriage too early” he simply answered Richard, „you may meet a thousand girls that please you, but you may live for forty years, aye, and more, to find the woman, to whom you would be for ever true. You will know her at once when you have seen her and it is an error to woo before, if you dream of love.”

Thus by the time that Ethel's wedding should have been, all parties were set upon excellent footing without the wedding. The brothership between the ex-lovers was not installed as yet, nor did Mrs. Graham pretend to hail Richard Lansdale as her dear son according to that arrangement, still this remained determinedly a scheme in the young charmers mind, who aspired to subjecting mother and daughter as chief prizes of his gallant victories.

For an evening meeting at his sister Gwendolines house, Richard had planned a capital move, in so far as it must be conducive to the general union and satisfaction of the contumacious constituents of the assembly present. He had a scheme to introduce Mr. Moffat, whose artistic business was somewhat lagging, to the notice of opulent patrons by making him known at his own favourers, Mr. Rosens, parties. Society should see the long occult genius and filled with enthusiasm raise him high over the pinnacle of his former experience. As a man merging in to the drowning waters of disregard, may obtain the highest pitch of universal attention through the very act of being dragged forth by a rescuer. It was an affair after Richards heart. All the Grahams were to witness their friends' public

triumph, Mr. Moffat had assented to the invitation, Mr. Rosen was interested to make his acquaintance, the ladies were wild to hear him.

Cards of invitation were issued at the house in Princes Park for a musical soirée. With curiosity kindled by diverse recommendations the artistical part of the frequenters at Mr. Rosens evenings flocked together to the drawing-room where the fine, sonorous-sounding pianoforte stood. The visitors scarcely had patience with Mr. Rosens courteous hospitality, proffered to the distinguished-looking pianist and violinist, in their eagerness to hear him strike the chords. The amateurs argued mighty things from the débutants neglected toilet and hollow eyes — the very features of consuming genius. Whatever position the threadbare coat might assign him in the ranks of society, it was accepted as an attribute of Alexander Moffats calling among the selfsufficient adorers of his muse. The master of the entertainment however was lavishing upon him the warm distinctions due to a new guest before assisting him to his professional triumph. Subsequent to his being introduced by Mr. Lansdale, the rich and cultivated merchant presented him to his daughters and his sister-in-laws clique as to his own few particular friends. Mr. Rosen hailed Allan Graham with undisguised pleasure among his visitants. „Although I observe with chagrin” he added to his hearty commendation of his young favourites appearance, „that only the concern for an old friend like Mr. Moffat is powerful enough to draw you into my saloons.”

The slight pique implied by this remark went home to Allans heart as he met the kind, harmless gaze of the man who meant well to him. „Injustifiable reserve which governs me towards a gentleman who makes me ashamed of it, unjustifiable but on the plea of cowardice. Look there, Allan Graham, how Miss Rosen is sighing for a compliment from Richard Lansdale.”

Miss Rosen was very much entertained by the attention of other young gentlemen besides; not too much, oh dear no, but just sufficient to make Mr. Graham feel himself supernumerary near her. She was never as much at home in the conversation he would lead with her as she was with that of other visitors whose region seemed especially her own, down to yonder admirer of Georgiana Osbornes, whose drawling slang she despised. I note a Mr. Bickering among the company, who is present with his mother, both fanatic devotees of instrumental art. To people remembering the name of Bickering and the slender youth who first bore it on these pages, taking it afterwards on a continental tour, I have to make the melancholy communication that he left off bearing it in the spring time of his age and of the year, falling a victim to the measles at Rome. The younger Bickering was heightened in value through this circumstance, remaining as the only one. He came near his brother in age, puniness and pallor of visage and fairness of hair. But he surpassed him widely in sharpness of intellect, it was Mr. Paul Bickerings glory to be a wit. Over and above that, the young gentlemans capacities enabled him to dabble in all conceivable accomplishments of polite society; so that, all things considered, it was a remarkable advantage for the latter this member of the familys surviving from the ultrachannel expedition. Paul Bickering, in opposition to his late brother, had an exquisite appreciation for George Rosens handsome daughter and was ever labouring to make his puns and witticisms delightful to her. The career of a wit generally comprehends sundry disagreeable hitches, but out of eight jests, let us say, it commands five laughs even from a delicate-minded lady like Miss Rosen — your wits by vocation can be so irresistible.

He did not command the laughing-muscles of Allan Graham, it might altogether be drawn into question whether

this gentleman possessed those organs at all. Bickering, who counted the laughers on his side, stationed him on the opposite one, where he stood rather abandoned.

Hush! cease all lounging tattle, Alexander Moffat has taken his seat at the piano, no one jests, no one laughs, no one talks. His lean hands spread over the octaves, his sure foot presses on the pedals. The wires dance and tremble beneath the lifted lid, the air of the drawing-room fills with their reverberations. The melody dawns through the rolling masses of sound. Mr. Moffat no more sits before a rustling, fluttering audience of fashionables, no more in a saloon of blue draperies and blue divans, he is at the altar of his muse. He is absent from his entertainers and the host of his fellowguests, he is in the vision his eyes are so habitually gazing at, until he closes with a roulade so often run into an abyss by lighter fingers. Then the world streams in upon him again. Then he must open his doors and let them enter with surprises and ecstasies and recompenses for the treat he gave them. Then they jostle against his love of music, that takes him prisoner in any scene where he calls it up, with technicalities, with connoisseur sentences, with mechanical extollings. The company is in raptures — a company in raptures is against Mr. Moffats taste. Yet he has made the most genuinely favourable impression possible. „For a man not actually laying claim to the honors of a virtuoso, the best musician she remembered having listened to,” Mrs. Bickering said.

„I am so glad of this applause your old musicmaster is reaping, my dear Ethel!” Winifred said, seeking Miss Graham, tranquil among the excited ladies. „It pleases me to see a person connected with your house causing such furore among our friends.”

Lloyd and his wife were included this time in the attendance of all the Grahams at Mr. Rosens saloos. Wini-

fred was also happy to introduce such a graceful addition to the company under the denomination of the younger Mrs Graham.

The elder Mrs. Graham was watching the least vociferous of Mr. Moffats admirers with most concern in their verdict. Those whom the harmony subdued and made pensive as it was wont to do in their circle at home.

The violinist, having opened his trial with this solo performance on the pianoforte, had proposed afterwards to accompany Miss Rosen on the instrument of his specialty in a duet. The audience, led by the anticipating hosts, clamoured however for an extension of the solo program, as the classic piece selected by the pianist had been of limited duration. Mr. Moffat added in compliance a *notturno* of Chopins.

"What a wicked set our enthusiasts are," said Mr. Bickering to a chum of his while the strains of the music were yet devouring the minor sounds in the room, "to eneore a tolerable performer after he has done his best. He executed that other piece with good sentiment, but he has not practice sufficient for Chopin." He fell to watching Mr. Moffat for a while. "There's nothing so queer as complimenting a man on a defeat. I believe Mr. Moffat is very harmless," declared Paul Bickering, walking towards the gentleman in question, followed by his expectant chum.

Mr. Moffat had not forgotten the company during his second performance, he had not dived so deep into the voluntary which did not belong to his favorite music. He received the thanks of the listeners with more readiness than the first time.

"That reverie of Chopins, as soon as it is rightly interpreted, is a ravishing composition" cried his malicious eulogist. "You so touched my sympathies in choosing it, you must accept my especial thanks, dear Mr. Moffat. Yes, as soon as there exists the agility to

carry out all Monsieur Chopins trials of skill, these nocturnos are jewels for a musical night. I dote upon this one among a thousand of classic productions and I really thank you for choosing such a trying piece. You are among the votaries for originality as our beloved, lamented Chopin made us, I have no doubt?"

Mr. Moffat paused a moment, looking restlessly at his interlocutor, then he said: "Tell me, my dear sir, in case you had met Mr. Chopin here, would you have tried to give him to understand that with all his art he would never be placed upon one scale with Beethoven?"

"My good sir, why should I?!"

"Then please don't imply to me without need that Chopins pieces are not as good under my hands as he conceived them. The great composer had no more right to be spared by you, than I have, as we both show openly what we are."

Mr Bickering inwardly winced at being detected. Of course he meditated upon making amends for his false move. Allan being witness of the skirmish, observing its drift from the beginning with fast-heating blood, saw the enemy dislodged in haughty silence.

"He likes to raise analogies between himself and the masters," whispered Mr. Bickering to his bosom-friend. "To defend himself he needs Chopin and Beethoven, haw, haw, what say you to that?"

"In parrying a sudden attack the most preferable retort may sometimes not be at hand, without that impeding the sentiment being perfectly understood by both parties," remarked a voice at the critics elbow. The duet between the piano and violin being in course of progress, Mr. Bickering had imagined himself better under cover of it than he was in effect.

"Please do not speak of retorts," he answered Allan Grahams interposition; "retort means *retourner le tort*,

and no tort has been attempted, as your friend in person will confirm." With that he again took up his conversation with his companion, breaking off his former topic.

While Mr. Moffat was yet the centre of general attention, Mr. Bickerings just reflections on his pianoforte trial being overreached by the violinists enchanting song on the four strings, it was mentioned by Gwendolines that some lovely compositions had also been created by his susceptible talent.

"Oh what a shame you did not play your own compositions," cried the undaunted Bickering, "Handel played his own compositions, as we have no one to play them to-day. Oh, Mr. Moffat, I shall die of longing to hear your music while you are not making us acquainted with an example of it."

Mr. Moffat started at hearing himself again addressed by the young man. "Which will never be," he said quickly.

"Don't say never, I beg you. Great composers often are impenetrable about their works until they are not well finished. Great composers —" he gave a droll leer at his confidants — "are a peculiar set. Most of them, it is quite remarkable, must be in Bacchus' trance to command inspiration. I do not know but that I might be a composer, if my anxious mother would not die to keep me out of the spell. You keep a little bacchus to light you at your music, now say you don't."

"You don't believe that I do."

"My dear Mr. Moffat, I can't believe anything about you. Of the celebrities one believes after what one reads. I only ask you what I would ask Mozart if I met him."

Contented with this sally, Mr. Bickering went in quest of Miss Rosen. The young lady was discussing some music with several of her companions and was just sitting down at the piano to illustrate a contested passage on the keys. Mr. Bickering placed himself behind her, approv-

ing to the highest degree until he hit upon a musical character which had been misprinted and threatened a discord to an unwary peruser. He got into the utmost excitement about it as he got into an excitement always at perceiving a fault, not resting until he prevailed to correct the error and substitute the true meaning. He drew forth a pencil from his breast-pocket to put the brand on the deficient note. Unhappily the point of his pencil was clean broken off.

„This is a conspiracy to have that folly of an ignorant compositor glaring upon one with audacity, for if I don't mend it, Miss Rosen, it will not be your dainty fingers would ever set a pencil-mark on this fair page. I only want a penknife to point it in a twinkling.”

Someone offered him the desired penknife. Allan Graham had produced it out of his pocket and handed it to him, yet clasped. Before Mr. Bickering uttered a nonchalant thanks, Allan felt a vehement grasp upon his arm. It was Mrs. Bickering, gasping out with eyes of alarm: „Not that, don't let him handle a strange knife, he suffers from haemorrhophilia, the slightest hurt is a great danger to him. Paul, give it back, in opening it, some blade may spring against your hand. Excuse a mother who is in constant, overwrought dread for her only son, Mr. Graham. I have such a horror of knives on his account.”

Allan rather impatiently received back the dangerous object, which the affrighted mother snatched out of her sons hand. The ladys fussy intervention struck him as antipathic, and unwarrented in its degree of unamiable regardlessness, expressed in her manner and tone, not in her words.

The hour of the companys breaking-up coming round, Mr. Rosen retained the evenings musician to be the last of his departing guests. Allan lingered near the latter,

wishing to accompany him home. When the two stood under the great folding-doors, which had let out the rest of their preceders, Mr. Rosen turned from his last leaves-taking to them. In warm terms he expressed to Mr Moffat his high satisfaction in the exit of the nights entertainment, depending from that gentleman.

„My musical soirée rested on you, Mr. Moffat, and I owe you many thanks for it being such a success. Many of my old acquaintances have confided to my care their acknowledgements of the art of my new friend. Mrs. Bickering for instance, the leader of our amateurs, has commissioned me to mediate your access to her own parties and will at a suiting opportunity, beg you to engage for the accompaniment of her nieces in their trios. These gifted young ladies almost exist upon music under Mrs. Bickerings presidence. At her soirées and matinées you will meet all the renowned dilettants I had the pleasure of introducing to you to-day, and many far greater notabilities yet, as we do not claim the honor to belong to the lions of the musical seasons.”

Mr. Rosens pleasant fancy swept over the possible issues of the kind scheme he had taken up agreeable to his dear Richard Lansdales advocations and which resulted in affording him a keen individual satisfaction. His vista of the encouragements to be continued in behalf of the impoverished genius, was to his surprise cut short by the violinists becoming fidgetty during the discourse and finally breaking out with the full impetuosity of his character: „Mr. Rosen, accept my heartiest thanks for your cordial hospitality, which I recognize as a favor intended by yourself and through the agency of that amiable gentleman Mr. Lansdale. Thank you a thousand times for a kindness, which is a thing rare with me. But I would rather stop at this point. Don't mention Mrs. Bickering, if you please. I will thank her kindly too, I am grateful to all

who have told me this night that they appreciate my art, and myself, indulgently. But I would rather not have my music appreciated, I have accustomed myself to have it loved. You have offered a great chance to me, Mr. Rosen, I see, perhaps it is the notion of that chills me. You must forgive me, my dear sir, but being old already for a hit of goodfortune I seem to lack the elasticity to make profit by it. I did not know this, when I came, but I am clear about it now ere I go. Yet I shall retain unalloyed the remembrance of your goodness and your daughters gracious support of it"

The unsophisticated merchant remonstrated in amazement with the artists whim to intercept the fartherspreading prospects of his introduction at the entertainments of his house, but upon his protests causing the latter to become more embarrassed and more heated, the well-meaning German limited himself to request Mr. Moffat not to deny himself to his own evenings, while he was excluding himself from farther pushed intimacy with his circle.

"Allow us the pleasure of your being seen and heard again at our house now and then, and let us not conclude hastily in respect to other demands" ended Mr. Rosen, with a friendliness that commanded acquiescence.

When Mr. Moffat and Allan were fairly dismissed from the scene of these hours contending excitements, the former said: „No new expectations, Allan, my boy; no saloons to lend me their glitter, no rich amateurs to take me up. It was a triumph, was it not? They congratulated me. The triumph was theirs, of showing what they understand of the science of music. Amateurs are celebrating such triumphs in distinguishing their favorites. That young Bickering has the right theory for music I do not resent his making sport of me, I should have resented his praise and he did not praise me. His mother may have a kinder soul, but they are cold, they are all cold. They admire,

but they may profane my hearts passion with some triviality any moment. They are all Paul Bickerings with different graces. Mr. Rosen has but a common liking for tunes — Mr. Rosen is the only man, to whom I was another thing than a self-working fiddle."

"This obstruction in an opening of promise is Bickerings doing" mused Allan, revengefully. "Mr. Bickerings importunities have embittered your feelings," he said aloud.

"No, have I not always spoken in this strain? That young mans boldness only set me thinking how I was falling into the common bargain of money and feeling. I have scraped through until now, so I suppose I may do to the end of my years, without apprehension of submitting to a Bickering."

"And balking the possibility of being befriended by any more Rosens."

"Ah, am I shunning Mr. Rosen? I am not, you shall see. He made you reproaches for eschewing his invitations, why have you given him reason for that? We both may accept freely what such a gentleman offers to us. He will not offer us anything to make us ashamed. Don't you be hanging back from foolish timidity, you will have better grounds to do so often and often enough, besides."

"What do you say to our lady-entertainers, the Osbornes and Mr. Rosens daughter?"

"Mr. Rosens daughter, my boy, is a gracious creature, as I have said, but don't let us have anything to do with her. She is like her father, and yet she is not. Without him she would let us fall. She is a child of that resplendent saloon, of that gentle company, she would never have sought out your sister for her friend, if it had not been for that hap of a years ago. She is gracious, Allan, gracious."

"Do you mean condescending?" asked Allan frowning.

"No, she wants to please us in entertaining us, but she does not do it to please herself. She belongs to her sphere, and will keep to it rather than fancy any personality out of it."

Chapter XIV.**In the Dispensary.**

The druggist-shop, some two or three streets distant of Mr. Clares and Mr. Moffats region, where Allan Graham worked and compounded for his life, lay in such a by-quarter of the great city, where things remain as they are just as long as they will hold. The house embracing the apothecary establishment might safely be prophecied to hold for uncounted ages yet. Rumour current in the neighbourhood alleged it to have been raised in the middleages by an italien jew and held by his descendants to the beginning of this century, when christian supplacers ended in chauging the humblemiened, but quietly ponderous pawnbrokers house into an expediary of wholesome drugs and iron drops. Since the mediaeval merchants time, the property had altered its form and extent, backbuildings and additions having been particled off again, as opportunities and circumstances advised when people were still building and bargaining upon the ground of this out-at-elbows row. The reduced centre which remained to be purchased by the father of the present Mr. Kenyon was an original contrivance to manage modern business and lead modern life in. The walls were thick, the doors were strong, so that each apartment was like a separate prison-cell, warding of all sounds of adjoining movement. They were like cellars, warm in winter and cold in summer. The house blinked with the fewest and smallest possible windows upon the street, and stared with all the more assurance into a spacious backyard enclosed by grizzly walls. The shop was dark and it was all it could afford to contain a reasonably sized counter. Behind it was a room, immense in comparison, which served as a labora-

tory, with light from behind, tempered through cause of traversing sundry diminutive and irregular cabinets, one of which contained lumber and the stairs to the upper story, another a dusky hole leading to mysterious souterrains.

Mrs. Kenyon, who did all the housework herself and seldom stirred out of her compass but once every day in the early morning, reigned in the solitary, monasterial upper story, leaving it to her husband and her husbands dispenser to relieve themselves at the counter. She was a modest nervous person, speaking in a low voice and treading softly, as if she would always rather be considered as not present. A person, whom young Graham liked, although her meek smile at a casual greeting was her only title to win liking. Mr. Kenyon was a man well suited to such a wife, gentle enough never to startle her frail constitution, matter-of-fact enough to pave out their joint way. A man with silver hair, over sixty, not quite of healthy complexion in that airless dwelling of his, looking far too dignified to be a miser, as repute stamped him among his neighbors and customers.

Perhaps Allans humour was not waxing pleasanter for being continually confined to this shadowy shop with its pervading odour of reviving essences. He himself did not reflect upon this probability, he reflected on moody tales of afflicted customers, on the suffocating rubbish not yet swept out, of this earth of ours, nor held possible to be swept out and on the seriousness of life, such as it was to him and to his dearest sister Ethel. His most cheerful occupation was in the laboratory, where his mind was taken up by the business on hand and he had a practisers happy pleasure in the neat execution of his allotted task.

One morning Mr. Kenyon was speaking with him in this laboratory, where they had both been preparing some mixtures, which they kept in provision.

„You are very expert in our trade,” said the elder man,

looking benevolently at his subaltern. „You ought to get higher wages than I have given you hitherto. Have you not thought so yourself already, Mr. Graham?”

„I can only live from hand to mouth with the money my employment yields and of course I wish for more when I think of the future.”

„We shall part by and by then, I suppose. I shall be sorry for it, for I esteem you very much, young man, but you deserve my good speed, that's sure.”

„I have no desire to part from you, Mr. Kenyon, only you see that a man strives for a certain habilitation, though in an unpretentious way.”

„To be sure, to be sure. My wages are for a very young apprentice, or for somebody very much reduced in prospects, who accepts any means of earning his bread. They are not for a practicant like you, who has all his chances before him and may want to marry and so forth. I can only expect to change my dependants repeatedly. I am not such a poor man as this may have the look of, but I must stick to my appointments. I will augment your salary by a few pounds, as long as you will bide yet with me because I value you exceptionally, Mr. Graham, and would recognize more as your due if I had power to pay it. But I have not, although my business yields a profit that should enable me to pay a little more decent remuneration and although I am not a miser. But, Mr. Graham, that gain must go another way. As a proof of my esteem I will tell you what I have never told any man in this house, why there is no getting on with me and why my profits are not appropriated to myself and my dependants. All surplus of my income for several years past — as long as I keep business in this vicinity, in fact — goes towards accumulating the sum of eighthundred and seventy six pounds. Every shilling, every penny I can spare is devoted to that end. With eighthundred and

IN THE DISPENSARY.

seventy six pounds a young man, of the name of Kenyon who was very dear to myself and Mrs. Kenyon, escaped from a wealthy commercial firm of this city to New York. He died there without even having time to retrieve that disgrace. It was left to me at a late hour of my age to wife that stain away. When this happened I was a druggists dispenser in a little country town — I never had my own business, but on the decease of my father, who grew to be eightyfive years of age; conducting this dispensary with a more sagacious head than my own, I trow, to within three weeks of his demise. My father had not economized, he just left the business to keep one afloat. The expenses attendant on his illness and death and my removal here being covered, I was fresh to begin with the restitution of our debt. I am hoarding up money for it by the odd pence Mrs. Kenyon and I know how to dispense with. I want to have the total of the sum and take it to the defrauded firm. It is a great firm, that may have forgotten in these twelve years a comparatively insignificant loss and I could not bring myself to step up to it with anything but the total. I am nigh upon this at present, I am at sevenhundred and ninety four pounds, twelve shillings, four pence. I hoard my money up here, I dare not let it work and multiply for fear of losing it; small tradespeople sometimes have such misfortune in investing a property. Thus it goes slow but sure. It is in the cellars below, where it will not be burned, nor seen, where it is safe as long as my life and Mrs. Kenyons lasts."

"Mr. Kenyon, you have reposed great confidence in me, to tell me all this, but you have not given it to one who will value it lightly. I shall take counsel with you as considerably before ever I take a step to abandon my engagement with you in deference to other claims. As to my natural inclination, I should wish to remain attached to a principal who grants me such token of being honored by him."

„Only please to not feel a friendly obligation imposed on you. I have not explained the motives of my arrangements with a wish to hold you back. But having this occult interest weighing heavily on my soul for many years, I have sometimes yearned to divide it with younger shoulders — while no one in our new neighborhood has been admitted to our bygone as he has not passed the threshold behind yonder counter, I have felt a fainthearted anxiety that one living creature should know of us strangers in our fathers place. Thus Mr. Graham, I cling to you with my sad story, the first to whom I could possibly have told it.”

„May you derive that rest then from this confidence which you have anticipated from the fact. Thank you for letting me know you, my honored master, as I was not far from knowing you either without your communication, after my half-years dealing with you. Within doors you could not remain so strange to a man as you do towards your customers.”

Allan found it no breach of confidence to relate Mr. Kenyons tale at home to his mother and eldest sister. Not an inkling of such things for Maud, to be sure. On Mauds young shoulders cares were sitting lightly indeed, slipping off probably, for want of hold. She had wept on her pillow over Ethels disappointment, in chilly autumn nights, she had sat watching Ethel occasionally by the winter fireside, wondering how people generally contrived to get over a deeprooted sorrow and musing how her sister ought to exercise the privileges of youth and steer out of it with all sails set. Then, as Ethel gave no sign of being a confirmed martyr to her love, as no change came into her old bearing, as no repining intruded upon the peaceful household idyl of theirs, Maud dried her tears, had done with her musings and sent grim grief to the winds.

She had not grown older and wiser, seemingly, since a

year ago, as she sat in Mrs. Lloyds drawing-room one Sunday morning, where she had repaired to use the piano for a supposed devotional performance. Looking out of the window by chance, she perceived Mr. Sidney Adams approaching the house-door up the street, he being quite a habitual guest now at Lloyds as at Mrs. Grahams, through the agency of their mutual friend Mr. Clare. Mr. Adams was upon the errand of looking after young Mrs. Graham, who for a fortnight had been suffering from an indisposition which was keeping her from church. With a mischievous twinge in the corners of her mouth, Miss Maud retired to the sofa, taking out a very frivolous-looking volume from under one of the side cushions. Deeply ensconced in its seductive contents Mr. Adams found her when he was ushered into the room. In the act of saluting the young lady the eyes of the austere divine scrutinized the volume carelessly hanging from her hand with one finger between the page where she left off.

„Mrs. Graham will be here in five minutes, I suppose, as the maid has gone to call her. Please take a seat, Mr. Adams“ said Maud coolly, remarking the while that he was quite riveted in his present position by a meditative contemplation of her interrupted reading.

The curate took a seat, still consulting with himself. „You are very fond of light literature“ he began at last, unable to find a better beginning for a determined end, „so fond that I even find you with it on a Sunday.“

„You know the book we were reading here all this week; yes, I believe, I may finish it to-day. One can do nothing else but read on a Sunday.“

„Not, Miss Graham? And ought it to be novels in that case? Do you thus understand our Sabbath conventions?“

„Oh, as to the conventions, I put the book under the cushions here when Mary comes in, or down in the parlor,

when Elizabeth wants to know about the dinner. We don't teach sedition to the servants, Mr. Adams."

"Why do you at once pass over to the servants? This book —" taking it in his hand from the table between them, where Maud had pushed it, and laying it down again — "possessing all its own merits, should not infringe upon the Lords Day."

"Why should it be unauthorized on that day? You can't make me read psalms all the morning and devotional lectures all the afternoon, and can't give me the inclination to go to church when I have it not," the girl matched his grave bluntness. "Sometimes I wish to hear a sermon and sometimes I don't. Then I am no good in the church, Mr. Adams."

"You must bend your mind to the right inclinations —." Mr. Adams, his lank body leaning forward with the stress of his sincerity, was in his city-missionarys office at once.

"It cannot be necessary to bend ones mind to be dejectedly solemn on the Lords Day. One should never do harm on any day, but one ought not to lay harm into things that come natural in all innocence. Sunday is the nicest day in the week, because all people are at home and at leisure, my brothers for instance, and as little work in the house for every one as can be helped, but then one must have freedom to enjoy that state of things. Else the day of rest is nothing but a day of moping. You won't turn human nature so upside down as to make it have constant pleasure in psalmsinging; it will sometimes find it tiresome and be all the worse out of this tiresomeness."

"How can a young lady trained like you defend the cause of finding the communion with God tiresome?"

"It may occur to me at any moment to commune with God, Mr. Adams, looking up from a page of this very book or at any propable or improbable occasion, but I won't fix a day and hour when I must do it with a will

and when all look towards me how I do it. I will take up my bible and prayerbook of an evening when some seriousness has been stealing over me, but I won't while away the day with them, when the constraint makes me yawn. Uncle Arthur is of our party, he wants to have the Sabbath regulations abrogated."

"Ah, for the vulgar, who will not be pious and must not be too much reduced in resources to keep them out of harms way. He has almost conformed me to his view at present. But you should set another example."

"The higher social scales are vulgar yet also, I fear. My mind and Gwendolines are so raw still, that we covet amusement on a Sunday. While that lasts it would be profanation and dissimulation in us to hold always a prayer-book in our hands. Uncle Arthur knows that and is more indulgent than you are, Mr. Adams. Speak to him about it."

Harmless Gwendoline entered at that moment to receive her visitor. She looked very fresh and nice, so as to assure by her appearance what she soon did in words, that she was entirely recovered in health. The curate, although much detained by her graceful chat, steered persistently towards an edifying conversation. Finally Mrs. Lloyd asked him to stop to luncheon, which he declined.

"We are much too frivolous company for Mr. Adams to take luncheon with on a Sunday" Maud said wickedly.

"Do not misconstrue me so far as to pronounce, that I am sundering homely joys from homely devotion."

"I am glad you say so. You are just capable of scaring ignorant people away from virtue, by making it so very obtrusive in small things. Mr. Adams, do please listen to my good uncle Arthur, and decide upon not making your parishioners feel as if you tied them hand and foot, when you teach them christianity. They won't take to it

heartily then. And it would vex me if they did not take heartily to your teaching for such a reason."

"The dissension among the tenets of his colleagues, that is the bane of a clergymans endeavours in the protestant church. That is what comes of shaking the general rules. As soon as pastors seek to lighten and loosen duty, the herds will get into confusion."

"Especially when there be such a number of duties which the sheep would never invent out of their own heads. 'Be kind to your neighbor', 'Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect', a sheep will see the plausibility of it — but do not jump and bray on the day of rest, keep to a certain meadow on the seventh day of the week — that's more than sheeps reasoning."

"You speak lightly of serious things; you are young, Miss Graham. Though that is the time, when one should not give too much credit to ones peculiar opinions."

"And at a later time one should not give too much credit to peculiar opinions not original of oneself, is it not so, Mr. Adams?" retorted young Miss, who was not to be corrected and would never acquiesce in the curates dogmas, whether it be that one should abjure the religious hightreason of scientific theories or swear to the ethnological study conducive to planting the genealogical tree of the chosen people of Israel on the pale coasts of Albion.

Whatever endeavours the strict clergyman may have assumed to silence that bold voice of the laity, he could not glory himself in victory when he abandoned the contest and the encroaching fumes of the luncheon-hour. He never could, leaving Miss Maud behind him. She would always talk on irreverently. To repeat what she said of Mr. Adams at that luncheon, were to repeat a type of the strain she had dedicated to the discussion of Mr. Adams.

"That's a man one would not like to let go alone, but rather be always in hearing of, to contradict him on the

spot. I'd stand behind him on the pulpit and nudge him secretly as soon as he issues one of his hopelessly orthodox articles of faith. He should be always contradicted as soon as he shows symptoms of benightedness and then he'd come out excellent. He is such a good honest man, such a rock of righteousness as only the orthodox people are, with the sole pity and default that they are orthodox. I wouldn't have him mar his mission with all his tiny compunctions and punctilios, — well, uncle Arthur will cure him by degrees, I suppose."

Uncle Arthur was Miss Mauds fortress, behind whose walls she retreated, when she grew tired of countenancing Mr. Adams obstinacy, knowing that the younger clergyman could never be persuaded that a real variance about eternal matters should subsist between that honored elder and himself. If Mr. Clare said white and he said black, his devoted respect would make it out that they were meaning just the same. And amen be it that so they were.

Mr. Adams, cumbered with many selfmade temptations, which happily did not weaken him in his onslaught upon those genuine, spiritual seducements warned against in the Gospel he propagated, walked his way from Mrs. Lloyd Grahams house with one new little temptation pinching and teasing him like a gnat. — A question about a half-resolved purpose wants to have its answer and Mr. Sidney Adams will not give it, because it is not about churches and only in a very conditional sense about parishioners and has no right to take the place of a preparation for a Sabbath sermon. Perhaps he would have done better to accept that invitation to luncheon and do battle with Maud Graham over the sandwiches for the cause of his consagrated calling. She would have kept his thoughts to the point under that condition, and a fit one for the city-missionary.

Chapter XV.

The Engagement-Ring.

How is Mr. Lansdale spending the afternoon? I cannot find him. He is not here, he is not there; he is not at his sisters, not at Mr. Rosens, not at other friends, impossible from their numbers to be minutely registered by us. Dragon the gray, is at his livery stables, he neighs out of tiredness in amongst his brother steeds. His master was not seen in church to-day. The name of Richards acquaintances being legion, one of them should have extracted information about him. However one of them supposes that he is with another member of the community and no one exchanging notes about it no one either will testify that Richard Lansdale is missing.

There was a Mr. Martin calling at a miserable house that we know at ten o' clock in the morning. Yes, Mr. Martin is to be found, Richard Martin is at Mrs. Rutherbys.

The tumbling door was opened when he had knocked two or three times, the dark passage and the mouldy smell ushered him into the poor old womans parlor. The air was even a little improved in the close tenement, the room a little tidier than the first time of Mr. Martins and his fair companions visit; Mrs. Rutherbys lodging seemed altogether made a bit more tolerable to abide in. The dusty window looking on the backyard was brightened, so as to admit more light into both apartments. The place of rendez-vous is poor, but not obnoxious now.

Richard has no right even to esteem it poor, when pushing open its private door without ceremony he sees at once that it contains what he quests for. A fresh, unrestricted young darling sprang towards him, twining her arms round his shoulders and crying: „Richard dearest,

are you come? Now the day begins. Oh I am so happy! Look at me longer and say that you see it. It is such pride for me to have you reading my eyes, Richard, love." Held by his arm round her waist, the girl smiles beamingly into her lovers face, that lover revelling in the wild tribute he receives under law of a longsettled compact.

"Your eyes say that your witchcraft never changes and relaxes, maiden of mine; but say, how many days has this week had for you and me?"

"Only one and a long night with dreams" readily answered the girl, disengaging herself from the young mans tender hold and bouncing towards the inner apartment, probably tenanted by Mrs. Rutherford.

"Diana!" Richard called her back, "don't you be upholding the ridiculous fiction, that I come here to pay my respects to Mrs. Rutherford."

"Don't speak so loud" she gave back.

"Why not?"

"Because the old lady can hear to a degree, and then you were unkind, Dick."

"Well, well, I'll tell you something in whispers presently. The days of our intercourse are few and short, my darling, and through no fault of mine. For some weeks past, you have allowed me only the Sunday, that is much less than other acknowledged lovers are granted."

"Fate always is averse to the most ardent of lovers. Common lovers may meet in their quiet houses every evening, but circumstances defy passion and passion defies circumstances. We are no common lovers, Richard, we are a singularly assorted couple; you have chosen me from the crowd of the streets, and are stooping to this filthy region to take me from darkness to light. You are my master in all things but in my love for you; I belong to the sphere of a servant, but I have not passed over into your service yet, I am still bound by other obligations."

„Your home is not much better than this?” he asked, „as I may infer from your way of speaking.”

„Oh, better than this, better than this hovel — save in one sense. I never compared the two until now. There’s a little of misery in my home too, but of such a different kind. Here, for me, there is no misery, but a joy never tasted anywhere else.”

„I’ll say more about that yet, later on. Come here, Diana.”

The girl approached him where he stood near a disjointed pile of masonry, representing a fireplace, with a rusty kettle and a rustier frying-pan denoting it to be the house-altar presided over by the old witch, who lent herself as discreet duenna to loves interviews. Richard had taken a tiny object from his breast-pocket and held it in his hand. „Here is your engagement-fee, my coy love, that must put all other obligations to shame,” he said, holding the object, gleaming like a spark of fire in the dusky room, close before her eyes. Probably you don’t remember all the things you once have said to me, as I remember them. You said to me, when first we conversed together in the train from Birmingham to London, that you would like to have the Koh-i-noor. I sought a Koh-i-noor for you at my jewellers, and that is how my gift to you wears a diamond at its top, — it shall be your Koh-i-noor, please, if you accept the word of a man who vows to fulfil somehow your faintest wish.”

The girl had recognized a ring in the object held up by her lover’s hand, she took it wildly from him when he offered it to her and kissed it with impetuous passion. Sparks of exultant pleasure flashed into her always lively eyes and raised the prettiness of her heated face into a weird, dynamic beauty.

„That is the ring of our engagement,” she cried, „that is my pledge from you that you are my own, as you have promised me. Thank you, Richard, my Richard, for

the ring. Tell me nothing else but that I here have the token that you will marry me and take me to be always with you, and live your high and beautiful life. This ring is your word that I am your Diana for ever, that you want me to be so."

"Let me put that ring on your finger, darling. Let us see how it looks there, how it sparkles on that little white hand, if the brilliant is of fine water enough for its destination."

"Never mind the bauble, Richard, when you put your love and your generosity into my hand. Take care" she whispered, casting a furtive look towards the inner door, where the edge of Mrs. Rutherbys left eye might be spying round an angle of the door-frame. Diana hid the ring among the folds of her dress. "She shall not see my treasure. She who never had such a supreme hope and married Mr. Rutherby to be fed and beaten."

"You shall marry me to be a lady and my queen, whatever you may be by birth. I am rich enough to cover your penury, independent enough to crown whom I will and subjugated so fearfully as only to see relief for my pride in speedily making you mine."

"I will obey you as soon as you bid me. I have taken my own path away from my fathers guardianship, I give myself into your hands, Richard, because you are the dearest of all mortals to me. I am an obedient child no more, but a woman obedient to the ruler of her heart. I have thrown everything away, trusting you to be my all, after you have owned me worthy to lean upon you, humble as I am."

"With that humbleness which is the title to altitude of standard, my truelove. There is but one thing missing in our sweet intercourse — there is one defect in it, Diana —" he said, regarding her wistfully.

„What is that, Richard?”

„Confidence is wanting, my dear, the first privilege of betrothal is wanting between us. We have long met as an engaged couple, we have put ourselves under the law of love, I seal it all with the signet ring of matrimony that shall follow, and still you have no confidence in me? Is the woman I contemplate making my wife to be as if fallen from the clouds for aught I know about her? You have never trusted me with your history, me, who trusts you with his happiness. You keep me shut out by secrets and mysteries, ungrateful, uncompunctious girl.”

„Richard, for what do you love me? For which quality do you elect me to be your lowly bride? Do you ask for my pedigree, has my history something to do with your love? Have you not decided finally to make me your own, independent of my sad secrets? Do not break my heart, Richard. For what do you love your Diana?”

„For that beautiful mouth that says it loves me, for those ravishing eyes that are reserved, but true, for that fair hand, which is modest but only made to caress. Which shall never have heavier task to perform than that, by my faith,” Mr. Martin replied, taking her once more in his arms. „But for all that I still persist, that you do not give me my complete due and that you must listen and learn from me what a woman owes her husband. I can't see clear as things stand. Now for instance, my love, a question of surpassing importance, how shall I claim you of your father? Or do you mean me to content myself with Mrs. Rutherbys extempore consent? Have you adopted her for your mother?”

„Don't make jest of that sainted name by applying it to the nasty old thing, who I would were no more the confidante of our happiness. Richard, I have never made plans, I live in to-days joy or in to-days sorrow, but the men must think practical schemes for me. I thought you

would marry me, raise me on your flower-litter as they do in the pantomimes and take me to your castle."

"Well, my dear, then you have the intention of abandoning entirely your poor father; you 'll be glad to be Mrs. — Mrs. Martin, and do not propose to see your parent again? For if your father is to remain a completely mysterious personage, as he has hitherto been, nothing but your entire separation from him can impede his celebrating acquaintance with his daughters husband. Now I will tell you, Diana, that the incertitude about everything concerning you but your personal charms has often troubled me. At an earlier stage of our acquaintanceship this was only natural, but at present it is so no more. I have established a right to better insight into your affairs. Observing that your most intimate concerns were a painful subject to you, which you strove to evade, for months I have talked only love with you, a captivating and riveting topic enough. But for once even you, my flower, must forsake your airiness. I believed on first impression that you belonged to the stage, but you do not, I think now?"

"No; dear me, I am not an actress, I wonder at them, Richard."

"Not an actress, nor a singer, nor a dancer -- there are great dancers, Diana, and honorable ones, whom princes love to raise on their thrones, as in the pantomimes, dear."

"I have no profession, Richard. None at all. I have said I took the rank of servant towards you, because I bow before the superiority of your education, the limpid radiance of your experiences, the rich elevation of your associations. But my father earns our bread and I never lay hand on any work but that of our small household. My world, my secret, my sorrow is my father, there is nothing more that I withhold from you. You are my joy, my future, the repository of my faith, don't intermingle the two, my best love."

„That family of Colstons in London, where I once found you as an inmate —”

„A connection of my fathers.”

„Ah yes, I must have faith in all that you tell me and think well of all that you do not tell me — —”

„Would you do otherwise?” exclaimed Diana, throwing herself on a low wooden footstool at Richards feet. „Would you do otherwise, Richard? Then renounce me at once! Say that you do not love me. Say that! For of love it would be unworthy. Doubt me, imply a doubt of me that I were capable of wronging and deceiving you, Richard. What do I know of you, but that I have to call you Richard Martin, that you promise me riches, which are dull metal to me, and that I shall be received into a family who will not scoff at a modest bride. All the rest is in our hearts that beat here and in our faces which we read here and in the locks of hair we have exchanged, that are precious to us as gold. Are these not the main considerations? Are these not the real confidences of souls? After this do you suspect me of playing false play with you, of doing you a wrong in withholding my own wrongs? The wrongs of fortune you were revoking? If my eyes speak truth when you embrace me, if you kiss the hand that caresses you, then I do you such an injury in keeping my fathers secret?”

Richard sat overwhelmed by this rush of fiery passion in his ungoverned sweetheart. She had often quenched an imperative remark of his with the loosened flow of her refractory temper. It had varied like gusts of tempest the sunnier allurements of their love-summer in the winter.

„Then your father has a gloomy reason to hide himself from human ken, I suppose,” Richard said slowly.

„How lugubriously you speak! There is nothing amiss with my father, but that he is a grim, misanthropical man, with a stubborn determination not to let his daughter

marry above station and an obstinate hatred against the refined gentleman, engendered by his own particular experience. Do you think I have never sounded him on the vital subject of my interest? We should rouse all his whims — I never knew how I should present you, my strange stray friend, at my fathers house, how I should excuse myself for contracting a gentlemans friendship in the streets."

"I must disguise as a laborer perhaps, to urge my suit before your father."

Diana gave a brisk little laugh. "How disguise your unused hands and the face that can but imagine the poetry of work? But to abandon my father is impossible. I will see him as Mrs. Martin, Dick. You shall see him as soon as I am that, never fear. But I am terribly afraid of there being caused a great struggle in the course of our love which now runs so smooth, if I let my father intervene. I am yet quite a child and may be bandied about as my governor pleases so long as you are not my proprietor. There is one thing more that I will confide to you. A thing difficult for me to confess, which is in my considerations besides my fathers antipathies and the impracticability of introducing you at home as my wooer. This is my real regret and my own especial motive to hold ourselves back from human inquiry and association. My father has a fault, not an uncommon fault, but one which I would allow no one to pry into and to make case out of against him, were it not that I brought the stranger as a near relative who would look on him with more than pity, as I do. When we are married all things stand in their places and I will manage everything, but before I do not possess full powers. Yes, Richard, even so I am ashamed of my father, but with a strong hope that I may help him in a quiet way and without any trouble to you, my love and my benefactor."

„I can imagine very well what that fault is which disfigures the father of so fair a child, belonging to an epoch of his life no doubt, from which he has sunken as many in Great Britain sink through one deteriorating vice.”

„You can imagine it — are you appalled by what I allowed your imagination to conjure up? Do you feel repulsed in drawing inferences? Or is your generosity too supreme to make me apprehend? Oh Richard, if I were not governed by my passionate love for you, I would cling to you as gratefully and desperately for the dread of seeing no future, no fate but with him — you and he, you are the only ones, the sole and only ones near to me.”

Of course Richard responded to this pathetic appeal as a generous, high-minded man, a youth moreover deeply entrained by a romantic love, which entrammeled him the more that it dared prejudices and ordinary appearances. Dianas voice, Dianas love outweighs all that her confessions or other deliberations might lay on the scale opposite to her. Good luck to the radiant orbs that have vanquished a mans ambition, to the soul that made its resting place in passions temple of fire-worship. Dianas strength is the charm of a face and a sweetly pleading voice.

„And of what calling is your father, Diana, my dear?”

Chapter XVI.

A Trust.

Within the week after Allan Grahams confidential conversation with Mr. Kenyon, he was again diligently employed in the second room one day, having the charge of

the shop at the same time, when he saw a customer entering from the street. He came out of his laboratory in answer to the summons. A man had thrown himself upon one of the chairs before the counter, whose gesture and deadly pallor of face bespoke him unmistakeably to be in an access of acute bodily pain and in immediate need of some lenitive to combat the attack.

„Give me laudanum, quick, only a drop of laudanum to relieve me,” gasped the stranger, breathing heavily, pressing his hands on his left side and writhing in excruciating agony.

Allan considered for a brief moment.

„Don’t you know that laudanum must be taken against cardialgic?” said the man. „It is a spasm of the stomach, that you see before you, and it overpowers me. Don’t tarry; my senses are dim from pain.”

Allan, having won an understanding of the case stepping forth from behind the counter, promptly administered an assuaging draught. While a natural color and expression spread again over the contorted features of the sufferer, the young druggist, holding the phial he had poured out the medicine from, in his hand, stood in front of his customer, surveying him silently. It was a man in coarse clothes, of ordinary height, with very light, curiously textured hair. Allan shifted his position so as to stand between this person and the door by which he had hastened in, he took the medicine-glass back from the still cool, damp hands of the patient, placed it on the counter, stretching his arm out at full length instead of moving a step towards it. The manoeuvre did not pass by his customer unnoticed. The mans eyes assumed that look half cunning, half timid, with which cats are apt to regard us, when we drive them into a corner, intent upon the slightest opening to take their leap out of our hemming in. He obviously was of that category of citizens, who are especially

particular about their chances of access and egress, from their non reasons, as cats also are, whether we mean them ill or not.

„That attack of yours is subsiding now” said Allan; „in five minutes you will be your old self again.”

„Yes, I'll begone now” answered the man, rising with a jerk, looking guiltily innocent of doubting that he could begone, when he wished. „I'm all right now, thank you, Mr. Druggist.”

„Don't hurry, sir, compose yourself entirely. I have to say a word to you besides, ere you go, my good man. But recover yourself before we attend to that.”

„You need not give me superadded prescription, I know them one and all. Here, I'll pay you, sir.” The man of spasms seemed to have overcome the rest of his sufferings by a more efficient remedy than laudanum. He measured his secouer with restless, sidelong glances, while he drew a little silver out of his breeches pockets. Detaching his look from Allan, he then counted the pieces of money in his palm.

„I'll tell you something,” said Allan, placing himself with heightened assurance in front of his customer, „you look as if your conscience were not quite easy, you can't look me in the face, man. Is that money you are counting there yours?”

„It is to be yours,” growled the man, going on with his counting.

„Probably not,” said Allan. „You don't answer me as an honest man would, and I am sure that I know you, at present. You have been an accomplice of a murderous assault upon a merchant of this city, a year ago. Don't try for an opportunity to escape my accusation, here comes my masters boy, who may call a constable for me as soon as I bid him.”

„I've gone into a trap, have I?” exclaimed the culprit

retreating and sinking into the chair again. „I'm done up. Put me into jail once more, they'll bring it home to me. These tortures racking my interior and the bloodhounds scenting me wherever I turn to have worn me out. My mind is dull with weariness; you have caught me at a good moment. I thought I might get help and I went into the devils den. In for it, then!"

„You came for help, unsuspiciously, and I meet you with advantage over you, as I conceive from getting at once an avowal from you. Therefore I only said that I would have a few words with you, provided that you agree to that without necessitating other measures. You shall give me explanations about the intended robbery and murder perpetrated on the person of Mr. Rosen, which you and two companions of yours were interrupted in by two gentlemen, one of them myself."

„I don't know what you may be drawing me to task for. Onefeat or the other, it's all the same. But don't impeach me with murder. I have never gone that length. Let me go, if you think I've done or wanted to commit a murder. I am innocent then. Look after the right person you are tracking and have pity on my offences—they do not reck of blood. They are only taking another mans bread to save me from starving."

„Do you remember that affair, when you associated with a rascally seaman and another ruffian to slay a gray-haired gentleman in a bystreet of Liverpool and made away with his watch while his life was preserved by the god-send of timely assistance? Have you a dim recollection of that among the number of foul deeds that may cram your brain?"

„I don't know anything of a seaman and a not-seaman. I remember the wild old foreigner about whom the police made a raid among us. I was in no plot against him. But when there's a scuffle in the night or in a good

situation I mix with it as it suits and see what falls off. It's robbing the thief sometimes, but that's my own account, I can't care what the parties are up to among themselves."

„You want to affirm that you are not of the original aggressors of Mr. Rosen, nor are the person to give evidence about them?"

„On my word, I will. If it has been a murdering business, that's my proof. Ask the police itself, if I ever was meddled up in a murdering job. — The police knows me."

After the disfigurement of the mans features, caused by pain and apprehension respectively, they now relaxed to their natural, not disagreeable expression, almost of honesty, which Richard Lansdale had found in London on the face of the dock-laborer with the hair of sheeps wool. A shadow stole into his free blue eyes at his last words, which augured of some remnant of better sentiments preserved from the days, when he might possibly have been yet less well acquainted with the police. Allan marked the relenting in the evil-doers hardened manner.

„The police knows you" repeated the young man.

„Yes, and it was once as far from having a hold on me as it is from having one on you. You think yourself an honest man, eh? Are you surer of it than I was once? Many of us were honest men in their day. Let me go for the thought that a good man is not as safe in his virtue as he thinks and may rue it yet to have brought a bad man to grief. I was like you in my youth. This druggist shop reminds me of it. I know all your pills and compounds; for I learned an honest trade when I began and did not leave it of my own pleasure."

„Now my good friend, don't believe that you advance a point with me for viewing me according to your persuasions about human morality. But I am closely related

to a clergyman, who is a friend to all sinners, and in his name I will prove one to you as long as your crimes stop short of too great depravity. It's doubtful whether your character would improve very much in penal institutes, moreover, as you have probably tried them often enough already."

„Often enough, by God. I have not such a horror of them as some of the vagabonds have. I am not a sluggard that groans at the prison hours. I'll do work if it's not too hard, and they'll have consideration seeing that I have a bad constitution. This stomach of mine is better taken into account by the prison authorities than when I do the battle of life in freedom. Life and freedom are miserable things too, I might as well be hanged, only we fellows have a foolish dread of it. Women and workless laborers and all sorts of gentlefolks commit suicide, but a thief and a jailbird does not, he shifts for his life to the last. I shall do it. And we've not done less than an honest man then, we've been no idlers and no revellers. We've toiled from morning to night, from night to morning for a morsel of bread, for a scantier indulgence than the unluckiest drudge under the yoke. With the knife at our throat. Don't despise me so, you honest man, I've worked as hard as any of you, with worse reward."

„At the expense of others, reprobate."

„I was driven into it. Ah yet, I envy you your honesty for all that I bear it a grudge."

„You may be honest whenever you please."

„May I?" cried the man, his scowl changing into excitement. „May I with my antecedents at my heels? May I yet, after thirteen years? You may say so who don't understand anything. A ticket-of-leave man is branded to be shunned by all good chances and righteous people, he is branded for ever, he knows his place. His society are

his fellow-convicts I was a druggist, sir. I had a situation like this here. I was always ailing with my doomed stomach and got into several displeasures with my employers. Employers want healthy, steady men and no trouble. One interval of sickness completely threw me out of my business, I was reduced to accept any occupation, because, besides, I had rashly married at too early a stage of my fortunes and two or three dependant upon me were starving and pinching in my house. I got the office of a letter-carrier. A thousand needs and claims had accumulated one out of the other, as poverty at each revolt pushes deeper into the mire. I was hard pressed — I scented a seductive sum of relief in one heavy letter I bore and took it. I would not do that again, if I could live my life back once more. That done, all that came after it, could not be altered, I would all repeat it as it came one springing from the other. I was sentenced to hard labor in prison and escaped on the second day after admission, by a lucky chance. I made my living as a degraded and hunted man. Of course I got into their fangs again and was sent to the hulks. Last spring I was let out of custody at Portland and went with a companion, a Liverpool man, to this town. I am a Londoner. I came there too. Of my family only a daughter is left now, whom I sought out where she had grown up, poor child. I had that girl on my hands consequently.

People would as soon take a person ill of the smallpox into their bedrooms as me into their business. I could not hide my condition because the constables kept watch on me and denounced me. What would you do with no work to be got and a snap of the fingers for charity? Would you sit down and starve? I was not so slothful as that. All new attempts failing I have gone to the docks to find labor there; I'll give it as an extenuating plea that I was vainly at the docks when the detectives catch

me again. I've shifted back here because Liverpool may be more convenient than London."

"And you contemplate sticking to this existence, which you yourself qualify as more repellent than death, more miserable than any other indigence? Causing evil by your hand and receiving evil back, wellpaid?"

"I have no choice" doggedly answered the thief. "Let me go, as it seems that you do not purpose to commit me. You have at least heard me out, sir. This toil is so weary that sometimes one gets completely indifferent about oneself and so I've cared not a straw what I said to you." But by this time perhaps he cared again, for no doubt it suggested itself to him, that meeting such an exceptionally lenient personage the latters commiseration might be worth his while. Being there it might do more wonders yet than release an identified pickpocket from his accusers grasp. More civilized desires than the savage anxiety to elude the danger of being caught occurred to the druggist and convict. He looked hesitatingly at his interlocutor as if reflecting what more to say.

"I wont let you go without something further. Now, go out by that door if you don't believe that I mean you good; you 'll have all the advantage then that a man of your class knows how to use" said Allan, stepping fully back from his position defensive of egress. "You do not want to escape?" he added, when the released prisoner made no motion. "Then I think you may have an honorable hope yet that will appeal to a forlorn help extended to you. Tell me your name and your place of abode, truly, and if you will have confidence in me, I will have the confidence in you to see what I can do against the complaints of one ticket-of-leave man. I'll test your complaints, if I can; I'll test your story too, as far as it goes, for I shall do all things openly and give you an open assistance before the constable who keeps you down."

“Will you give me employment, sir?” cried the ticket-of-leave man. “Give me a trial. I am not a thief by nature, sir, I shall be glad of work and emancipation from the police. I understand my old profession, pharmacy and chemistry. I can do coarse work too, which I was accustomed to in jail, though I hate it.”

“You have not forgotten your apothecary arts yet?”

“Give me a trial. I am forty years of age, I am in the best years yet. Oh sir, for my daughter’s sake, don’t retract your benevolence. A girl of seventeen years of age, whose fate can be saved yet.”

“Mark me, I do not have it in my power to promise you anything but my good-will to-day. But that you have and I count on some friends to support it in your behalf. I will look after you and your daughter to-morrow. So you have a daughter implicated in your bad courses that is worse. She is young — man, you have lost her for thirteen years!”

“But I have her with me now. She shares my fate. Give me honorable bread and I will maintain her honorably. Though I did not a father’s duty by her, I love her with all a father’s love. My name is Thomas Larkes. I will submit to anything, so as I shall be able to warrant my Charlotte a safe existence, which I have defrauded her of during her childhood. She has claims on people’s pity, yes, see her, consider her, and you will not have it in your heart to be hard and otherwise than you made me hope from your merciful demeanour. Look that I am her father and will have more pity on her misery than that luckless girl should inspire a stranger. Believe me for that to be a trustworthy recipient of your grace and with no call to be relentlessly treated according to my merits.”

Having dismissed the man upon the foregoing understanding, Allans thoughts, left free by his ordinary avocations, pursued the subject of the assistance he had promised.

Here had arrived the case, often discussed with the Reverend Mr. Clare, of trying friendship with the unclean refuse of the people, of attempting an appeal to nobler human nature buried by want, crime and the state of war against lawful society. A man of honor as mediator between sullen sin and unyielding justice; he did not possess the tenderness of his uncle, that forgot the superiority of its righteousness in the fervent reclamation of the wicked, but that zeal for good, jealous of correction, not of punishment, mistrustful of giving the task into unknown hands. Allan was about to make an experiment upon his theories, engendered out of his intercourse with his popular clerical relative and venerated teacher, on as hopeful a subject as Mr. Thomas Larkes, the unmasked outlaw thrown in his way.

He went to the premises designated by his singular acquaintance next day, finding them rather innocent-looking in no very blackguardly street. Mr. Larkes was eventually there, as well as the heartsoftening daughter. The latter was quite a spruce girl, of decent appearance enough with some tidy needlework on her lap and a demure, retiring manner. Her father explained that she earned her own bread honestly, whenever she could get work, that she did all to make her living decently short of leaving that new home of theirs and abandoning him to himself. The daughter, scarcely uttering a word, did not join in the part of awakening compassion, which Mr. Larkes had allotted to her, who maintained himself in an apparently genuine effusion of supplication.

In continuation of his interest, Allan introduced his uncle Arthur to the acquaintance of Mr. Larkes, and was eager for that gentlemans verdict about his protegees. Here he had lively sympathy of course and keen, not less than benevolent judgment. Mr. Clare gave himself satisfied with Thomas Larkes moral attitude; a man lowered and debased on the surface, but with more than the average elements

of redemption. He concluded this from the man Larkes' humble and patient listening to his exhortations and some finer traits of feeling referring to his only child. With regard to that latter however, the pastor declared himself differently than Allan would have expected. „The daughter is a more difficult character than the father, it appears to me; she meets my addresses as if she were void of piety. She listens unresistingly, but never a natural emotion, a confiding utterance escapes her. Illtrained people, when they are accessible to admonition, may slide back very often from their contrition, depraved habits hold by them with deep roots but they have glances and gushes of remorse and pain where they render themselves to me. Thomas Larkes is corrupted but it is only a disease spread on sane ground — he has a true affection for his daughter and a fond admiration for her, which is a touching simplicity in him. He deserves pity; Charlotte Larkes does not admit one to decide about her. She must have a girls reason to shut herself in and be impassable, or she is not good.”

After having summoned uncle Arthurs aid and opinion, Allan in the course of a few days asked his master, Mr. Kenyon, whether he would be propitious to taking a ticket-of-leave man into his service. The elder druggist demurred a little to give a decision in answer to this proposition. Allan stated the circumstances of the case, how the accidental consonance between the mans requisite and the opportunity at Mr. Kenyons, whom he had judged to consider the implied risk kindly, occurred to him and how he himself were resolved to make all exertions with his fair name to get a situation at a more strict employers'. He laid stress on the proofs that spoke in Thomas Larkes favor, as on the undeniable truth of his arguments that he was wellnigh shut out from return to his unsullied fellow-creatures. Mr. Kenyons wavering began to lean determinedly on Allans part.

„Yes, yes,” he said pensively, „I must take him. Whether it disquiets me or not I must stand by this poor wretch as true as we hoped for charity on earth for the deluded young man who is gone. It is settled, my dear Mr. Graham, if we can settle with him.”

His point gained so far, Allan set to argue about the possible risk of the arrangement he had advocated. Assuming the worst, there was no great opportunity for Mr. Larkes to damage his master in any way. Mr. Kenyon was mostly present in his business, Mr. Larkes was in the preconceived persuasion that he entered a very poor and straightened establishment, the secret sum actually existing in the house was well secured? Allan inquired pressingly. His principal was by this time tenaciously resolved not to withdraw himself from his task of humanity, he shook his head to his young subalterns prudent and conscientious reflections and stamped the question as agreed between the parties.

According to a further suggestion from Allan, it was arranged that Larkes should consent to a term of trial in Mr. Kenyon's business under the former's supervision, during the time that Mr. Graham should complete his own period of engagement.

The difficulty regarding the prospects of the assistant abdicating in favor of the ticket-of-leave man, was by a fortunate accident lightened by his having strong expectations to obtain a much superior situation in Mount Pleasant, with a druggist of the name of Daniel Edye. Allan would have passed by the chance in order to remain yet with Mr. Kenyon, having fixed his preference besides on the humbler districts of the town, but he was bent on eagerly prosecuting his suit now that he was making room to a needier one. His projects in best course, Allan felt it as a duty to communicate to Mr. Rosen the steps he was taking with his discovered aggressor. The German merchants

character was of a generosity that did not manifest itself surprised at his young friends dealing with the case. He enjoined Allan to apply to his succour for the outcast whenever his own resources might fall short of unforeseen demands. The wealthy gentlemans benevolence could not refrain from offering money by all means, only a modest sum, the donor pleaded, to maintain Mr. Larkes in honesty, while he was as yet not earning regular wages at the druggist shop.

Mr. Larkes started a little, when Allan imparted to him the marks of Mr. Rosens forbearance, adding that the latters generosity would be yet greater in behalf of his daughter, if she deserved it and sued for it. Mr. Graham said as much, although he had not pressed Miss Larkes on the merchants charity, bearing in mind his uncle Clares adverse statement about her, hoping devoutly to be able to recommend her later on. But Mr. Larkes intervened impulsively: „Oh sir, don't mention Mr. Rosen to my daughter, his very nobleness would hurt her, she could accept nothing from him, she is so sensitive. Leave her to me, you, my benefactor, never utter that name before her. I will scrape out a living for her and me, as soon as I am installed at Mr. Kenyons, and she gets some sewing to help herself with even now. Give Mr. Rosen the thanks of an undeserving wretch, but allow us to break with the revengeful past. I have not robbed you, nor Mr. Kenyon, nor Mr. Clare, nor Mr. Moffat. You are bright, you are the new life to me and my child.”

Whatever queer delicacy seemed to sway the criminal mind of Mr. Larkes, Allan, until farther events, deferred to it. The outlaw to be retrieved, naturally also engaged the interest of Mr. Clares and young Grahams odd musical friend. „We will drag him out of his perversity between us,” said the idealistic Alexander, „with you, Clare, and model Allan and hallowing music together, Thomas Larkes

and his daughter should inhale an atmosphere to cure them, they ought to breathe purely soon, my friends."

The situation at Mr. Edyes in Mount Pleasant eventually fell to the lot of Allan Graham. It was the first stroke of real good fortune the young man ever had had in his life. On the eve of leaving Mr. Kenyons dispensary, the man Larkes having proved himself to satisfaction during his trial, Allan once more recurred to the subject of the insured safety of his poor masters precious property in the cellars of the house.

"Is there really no fear of my zeal for an unhappy stranger exposing you to a dire possibility of wrong, good Mr. Kenyon? Your money is kept by a better safeguard than our trust in Mr. Larkes' probity? I have counted on that, or I could not pardon myself for throwing this precarious subject upon your generous mercy."

"Come with me," said Mr. Kenyon, "and judge for yourself how I keep a property not my own."

The elder man led the way through the laboratory into the small cabinets behind, passing from the one containing the staircase by a small door into the one showing the stonesteps conducting to the souterrains. He shut the intervening door of rather slight make, probably substituted by a careless tenant for a stronger one more congruent with the pervading spirit of the edifice. Having previously taken up a candle and matchbox he lighted the former upon arriving in the shadowy passage at the foot of the descent. At the left hand opened a door of thick oaken boards, impenetrable as that of an ancient underground dungeon, into the apartment exercising the functions of an ordinary cellar to Mrs. Kenyon, lighted by small windows visible from the courtyard. This door stood half open, probably in consideration of the frail druggists lady's else having to handle it now and then to the detriment of her arms. Over against this entrance, on the right side

of the passage, another door, its match in power of resistance lowered in the wall, with rusty ironwork upon it, suggestive of its having watched there unused for centuries. It was fast locked, and only by setting work to an intricate machinery, not easy to be deciphered but by skilful application to the trick of it, Mr. Kenyon moved the heavy wing and let his light shine into the interior it protected. A moderately sized room was disclosed to view, not quite empty, but filled with that species of lumber which households are unable to use and yet loth to throw away. An arched doorway led off into a further darkness. That doorway looked more interesting than the unbolstered chairs, broken crockery, old bird-cages and strawfilled chests tumbled together in the first compartment. Mr. Kenyon however proceeded no farther. He went straight up to one half-a-dozen tattered old habiliments, heirlooms from the precursory jews for aught one might judge, hanging upon the wall, threw it on the floor and bringing his candle close against the masonry lighted up the uncovered place. From the large square stones that formed its material, he could press one, seemingly like the rest, but in effect only a thin slab, sideways into the wall, leaving a triangular recess to the right or the left, whichever way it was pushed, provided both triangles were empty. At present only one of the recesses admitted the moveable stone, in the other lay an unsightly gray paper packet, on close inspection alone detaching its brown contours from the bricks forming the black hole. This packet enclosed Mr. Kenyons trustmoney.

"The secret of this drawer was made over to me by my father," said Allans conductor. "You have now seen how I manage when visiting my misers hoard. Nobody but Mrs. Kenyon and myself are supposed to frequent the departments of our house lying behind the laboratory. Any other person met tbere would have to answer for it; some

person before yonder cellar-door would be a burglar, because we always shut the cabinet-door behind us, and in this latter case I say, he will not know how to get farther."

Mr. Kenyon spoke with such firm surety that it agreeably relieved the sense of venture implied by his taking the avoided ticket-of-leave man into his service. He had had an additional warning to Allans a few days before. They had dispatched Mr. Larkes on an errand in the course of the day, when a constable entered the shop and asked of young Graham after his master. When Mr. Kenyon had been called in, the warden of safety addressed him, in order to make him aware that he was employing a returned convict.

"Thank you for giving the notice" replied the druggist, "but I am acquainted with the circumstance."

"That's rare, that an employer knows it," grumbled the official, who had made himself known as police-constable Peter Hughes.

"Generally the employers are taken by surprise and have nothing more urgent to do than to discharge them with full speed. I hope you are not too unsophisticated, gentlemen."

"Mr. Hughes, I hope you will not overstep the bounds of your duty" Allan angrily interposed. "It is not your office to operate against a ticket of leave man's advancement, but only to prevent against deception by him is it not?"

Mr. Hughes turned back from the street-door. "You are taking Thomas Larkes' part very hotly, young man. My warning has its full worth for the guarantee of honest establishments, notwithstanding."

"You are putting honesty out of the dishonests reach if you add too many insinuations to be listened to."

"The dishonest are out of the reach of honesty in that sense, sir."

"Would that you preached that maxim everywhere as

much in vain as here," cried the young dispenser, his quick blood rising.

"I am of my assistants opinion, and not to be changed in it by your professional advice and persuasions" added Mr. Kenyon with mild decision. "Good afternoon, Mr. Hughes."

The ticket of-leave man proximately was established in the room of Allan Graham, dispensing the drugs and wonder working powders over Mr. Kenyons counter. Allan earned Mr. Edyes approbation and fair wages in the bright druggistshop in Mount Pleasant; with brisk and successful semblance transiting through London Road on his daily way to his mothers house and back.

Chapter XVII.

An Unexpected Encounter.

One evening Allan was returning home late, coming from his friends, Mr. Moffats. He was for regaining Bold-Street when he passed the house, whose upper stories harbored a club, much frequented by Mr. Lansdale, dubbed the Harmony by the harmonious youngsters who composed it. Under its decorative portal Allan beheld assembled a group of young men, amongst whom the most prominent figure was the beloved Richard, having his arm linked with significant solicitude to that of the amiable Paul Bickering.

As soon as Allan came up to the party, Richard hailed him with his natural friendliness.

"Allan, you are out late to-night. At whatever hour however you may perambulate the streets, you will never consent to enjoy our harmony with us, that's ill-tempered in you. Are you going home, dear fellow?"

"Yes, I am" said Allan resolutely, suspecting Mr. Lansdale

of a design to draw him yet for half-an-hour into the luxurious rooms, which he had but just quitted with his companions. He was much in error, though, with the exception of conceiving that Richard had a design, which he unfolded in brevity.

Mr. Bickering, insurgent of his mothers anxious admonitions had looked deep into the wine glass and being little accustomed to that freedom, underlay all the more its victimising influences. He was to be sped to his bed some way and for that purpose had been transported with some difficulty down the stairs, himself desirous of remaining yet over the golden fluid. Now Richard, much as it was to his taste to walk the streets with the son of a M. P., saw less attraction in escorting a refractory reveller to his house. So he fastened on young Graham to convey the sad subject to his parents, omitting nothing that a flourish of words could smooth and polish.

„Grove Park is rather in your direction, is it not? If you 'll take him down that street yonder, you'll find a cut towards Kingstreet afterwards. I would take him there with pleasure myself, but it's dreadfully out of my way and my landlady scolds when I knock her up at preposterous hours. You 'll do us the favor, Allan, that's a good chap. You 'll do Bickering a kindness, though you are at arms with him, I believe? You almost had a quarrel together at Rosens the other night, hadn't you? But you won't mind and you haven't forgotten his delicate state? He's grievously intoxicated, dear me, get him off if you can."

Allan accepted the charge, frowning a little, but without raising objections. Richard hat reckoned well on his obliging disposition or his tactic in responding to his call of friendship. The group under the portal smiling and chuckling saw the pair disappear round the next corner. Allan not the less disgusted with his charge for all his complaisance, bethought himself of the least trafficked tho-

roughfares that might conduct to the Bickering residence, having no more partiality than Richard for taking the arm of a bacchanalian before spectators.

Mr. Bickering was in a garrulous condition, besides he had become possessed of a contumacious spirit and an uncontrollable inclination to sing, 'O if I were the moon's soft ray,' which he had doubtlessly regaled the fellows of the Harmony with. At first Allan had to keep hold of him in order to prevent his returning to the club, but resigning himself at last to his companionship Mr. Bickering began all sort of jabber, which soon, heightening his conductors impatience, led to the topic of the Rosens and Miss Rosen in particular. He was getting plainly intolerable.

"They are going away to Waterloo, beginning of June. Going away, yes. Trol law law. O if I were —"

"Don't sing in the street, Mr. Bickering. You'll go to the club again to-morrow and sing there."

"Winifred, Winifred —" Mr. Bickering was nigh upon weeping — "I love her, she is the loveliest girl I ever saw. I shall follow her. She is a darling. She is a dear, dear darling. I will not be seperated from her, never. Mr. Graham. Are you Mr. Graham? Never. I love her. Winifred —"

"Don't take that name into your mouth at present. Be quiet. You are coming near your mothers now. What will your mother say?"

"I will not be separated from her. My mother loves her. She says, 'dear Miss Rosen' —"

"Hold your tongue, I say. Come along;" Allan with fierce resolution began to drag his voluble charge along, with not very considerate hurry.

But Mr. Bickering did not submit to this treatment. "I won't go on. Is this Princes Park? I'd go to Princes Park and nowhere else."

"You would no doubt, you boor."

„Boor, do you say boor?” flashed up the youth at Allans inadvertant rudeness. „Who says boor to me? Do you want to fight? I'll fight you. You quarrel with me. You love Miss Rosen perhaps. I say you love Miss Rosen. I won't go on. You are jealous —”

„Jealous of you, ha, ha” cried Allan, entirely losing his temper.

„Aye aye, you are jealous. Jealous, he, he. That's worse for you than for me. Everybody loves her. I love her. Fight me fort it. Jealous!! O if I were the moons soft ray —”

Mr. Bickering had placed himself with his back against a wall, taking fast hold of a doorframe, consonant with his resolution to frustrate Allans intention of bringing him on. Allan, letting his arms hang down at his side, in an attitude of wrathful resignation, allowed him to sing as he liked, contemplating him scowlingly.

„My love I'd fondly seek” went on Mr. Paul with his lines. But another maliciousness tickled him. He interrupted his tender stanzas to resume his obstinate chatter. He laughed in defiance of Allan, he roared through the almost evacuated street. „I won't go on. Miss Rosen is worth all the princesses of Great Britain. You are jealous of me, I can see you are. I love Miss Rosen, Miss Rosen, Winifred Rosen!” shouted the gentle lover in a stentorian voice, to document his independence of Allans injunctions.

This was too much. To have that girls name bawled through the town by a nightly reveller, loud as a watchcry — Allan got hold of the young gentlemans arm and shook him, shook him with such relentless force that his muddled brain reeled, his feeble breath went out in gasps, his delicate frame might be jumbled into a heap, for all that the aggressor cared or the attacked one preserved the sense to know.

Suddenly a heavy hand fell on Mr. Grahams shoulder.

„What a brawl is this” asked the rough voice of a member of the public control. „Are you shaking that young man to death?”

„To silence” answered Allan. „He is intoxicated and behaves himself outrageously.”

„You have taken liquors with him, I suppose.”

„No, I have not.”

„Was he murdering me?” interposed Mr. Bickering, regaining more of his senses by being released from the shaking than he had lost through it, one might believe. „He’s a tiger. I’ll fight him, he shan’t do it again.”

„No he shan’t, but you’ll go with me, my friends,” said the constable.

„I’ll fight him on the spot” vociferated the ill used fellow, assuming such a menacing attitude, that the mediator took him roughly by the shoulder.

„Take care with that young man, whatever you do,” interposed Allan, „he is given to dangerous bleedings, he must not fall against some hard edge for the life of him. He is Mr. Paul Bickering, son of William Bickering of Grove Park.”

„Oh is he? You almost had done for him without the bleeding, sir. What were you meddling with him for?”

„I was taking him home and trying to manage him. He put my patience to the proof strongly, I assure you.”

„Possible. We’ll now take him to his fathers house together, young man. He made a precious row, I can attest.”

The affair ended agreeably at Mrs. Bickerings door, where, received by his reproachful mother it may be hoped that the latter set to divising severer cautions to keep Paul from repeating his début. — What heavy trouble that rogue Lansdale escaped, when he shifted his charge on Allans shoulders!

But he also had an adventure a little later on, which

might count for a retribution, inasmuch as his personal dignity was affronted like Allans by the policemen's intervention. It happened in London. Richard had come again to the metropolis in the summer of this year; it was some family-affair or commission that brought him there, but, lucky chap, affairs to him only were the express-train that took him to pleasure. Maybe that some private interests worried him yet that were neither business nor pleasure, but then he pursued these for his own satisfaction still. He trod the circuit of Diana Rowes original stronghold and he mused on Diana, on the Colstons, on the old messenger for the five-pound note, on all that suggested and complicated the unravelling of her mystery. If Diana governed his heart, his mind knew not the yoke that would have forbidden him to hanker after all the information, possible to be elicited in defiance of his darlings wishes. Dianas former spellwork was turning against herself: she had lured a noble fish into her nets leaving aside her good looks, which were no doing of hers chiefly by the spicy charm of concealment, by the incitement of her reserve. Now that the young man had won her, that the power this obscure girl exerted over him was so great that it became his ambition to make her his wife, now Dianas secrets were a stumblingblock and a hindrance in Richards resolutions. He was as determined as he could be to baffle poor Dianas dodges, and to know if possible before he married her the house from where he took his singular bride under his roof. She had silenced his questions with half-intelligible intimations; while he stood under the immediate jurisdiction of the little vixen who held him enslaved, he was pliant as hot iron under her dictates, but left to himself, free from her witches fumes, he at once reverted to the purpose of tracing her out. Dianas life could be all that is not worth the telling, for being common as other peoples quiet experiences and

graceless as some peoples. Mr. Rowe, her father, with some attaching blemish that made it convenient to ignore him as much as possible, inferring from his daughters asseverations, was a most uninteresting personage. Very simple the probability that the villainous-featured servant at Euston Station was his dependant in business or somewhere; that Mr. Rowe were a cousin, or an employé or a feeder on the charity of the Colstons. But why not know it? Richard would fain have set a prize on the opportune reappearance of the assumed menial and he made up his mind decidedly to attempt information at the Colstons. Not like a bashful lover, recoiling from being taxed with undue concern, no, as a man with some sound reason to ask he would openly push his investigations — Diana would never know of it or be forced to forgive it soon enough. He wanted to see clearly, to know, what he was about to cover with the love of Richard Martin and the name of Lansdale.

It was his pride to present society with a Mrs. Lansdale, chosen in full Lansdale loftiness from inferior rank without a dower but levelling beauty, for the sole sake and glory of romantic love, grown so nowadays but in some distinguished spirits of haughty mould. He need not mind that Diana with all her graces, had not the gentility proper to a station akin to his, her youthful proclivity would soon be taught by him to varnish over that; he could take her into a new life and give her a new name and need not care what was before. But mystery engenders suspicion and distrust — love may be stronger, yet those will darken its path. Diana put great store by the might of love and reckoned upon Mr. Martins putting her into her promised rights for what he had seen in her since first they met in the train. Perhaps he would, for he was well bound and fettered — in case all his inquiries failed.

Responsive to his betrothed ones reticence, Richard had never yet disclosed his surname at Mrs. Rutherbys; it was rather an adventurous sort of intercourse, full of small prevarications as of the despotism of externalities.

In defiance of his unconscious sweetheart Richard devised a method and pretext to make good his introduction at the Colston house with the end of gathering some desired particulars about Miss Rowe. He succeeded so far as to face not noly the rigid master of the house, but also the Misses Colston, who nobly vindicated Mrs. Morris', the grocers wife, former sentence upon the plainness of their looks. Among the family complete Richard had a full chance for the advancement of his ends, as the taciturn father and the rattling sisterhood supplied for each others deficiencies. But none of them all would admit a Miss Rowe among their acquaintanceship. Not even when Richard, desperate to do his utmost at his only place of recourse, described the young lady as visiting the house with her little dog, which implied intimacy, could their minds be brought to the recollection of Miss Diana Rowe. The dog was a horrid encumbrance even, for the youngest Miss Colston candidly conceded that they counted theatrical characters among their friends who might use an alias upon occasion. But the circumstance of the dog induced the most crisp and lively of the young ladies disdainfully to apply to dumb Janet Hobbs, whether she opened the door to a black and white spaniel in her life. With many gesticulations and pantomimes the inquiry was conveyed to the deaf-and dumb housekeeper, and was at last received by the blank-faced dame. Probably conclusions rose up slowly in her mind, but evidently she conceived one in the course of the pantomimes and strove to communicate something. Richard awaiting the transmittal from her expert mistresses, was dismissed with the following result: „I can't make her out. It appears that she does

know something upon the subject, but Janet is unable to make herself intelligible. Miss Rowe must be one of Janet Hobbs connections, for I suppose she has admitted the little dog in our absence."

Janet was wildly enthusiastic to submit her evidence, but in vain. With disappointment she observed the gentleman give up the task of understanding her, although doing it to the far greater disappointment of himself.

Thus Richard could make no more account by his stay in London for the affair he had so much at heart, if it were not by possibly coming upon the old retainer through that good luck of his. Meanwhile he was as much in the streets as he could from the royal theatres to the docks.

He did not neglect Mr. Robert Graham notwithstanding his division with that old friends daughter. It has been remarked that Richard was eager to consolidate his alliance with all his ex-betrothed ones relations. Mr. Graham did not require much stopping and patting to reconcile himself to the reversion into an anterior state of things. So it resulted that Mr. Lansdale, when the companionship pleased him, was seen in Cheapside, or Ludgate, or Leadenhall, with Mr. Graham, shabby and swaggering at his side, always dispensing practical advice and always operating against a prodigal outlay of money. Richard had an undefined fancy about him, that a gentleman so erudite in Cockney-history, might yield some effectual advantage upon one occasion or another.

The latter was ill in his place in Regent-Street, where all the glittering expositions in the shop-windows demanded others than niggardly spectators and minds devoid of reverence for fashion and the haughtiness of fame. Mr. Grahams sidelong glances into the jewellers and the milliners establishments doubtless made specific evaluations of the tinsel exhibited to view; Richard mused where he should buy — Mr. Graham not being present — some pretty keepsake

for a fair young Londoner, who would be delighted at his bringing her a greeting from her native town.

Both gentlemen were pleasantly occupied in this way — one antagonistic to the shopowners of Regent-Street, the other conciliatory. What was their astonishment when suddenly, the two coming up unawares with a couple of elderly ladies, an indefinable bustle ensued, an eager, wrinkled old hand took hold of a button on Richard Lansdales fine cloth coat and a fussy old dames voice exclaimed: „This is the man, Miss Diverty, this is the man who cut my pocket in the train from Birmingham!”

„Take him, hold him, I recognize him, Mrs. Stephenson” cries Miss Diverty. „Police! Police!”

The passers-by on the pavement were arrested by Mrs. Stephensons and Miss Divertys excitement; Richard stood dumbfounded by this unexpected salutation. He stared at the old ladies, who, irrefutably rustic from the cut of their habiliments to the impetuosity of their manners, confronted him, accusative and fearful of his eluding them. He might not have found words for his surprise in half-an-hour yet, if Mr. Graham, quick to the point in any emergency, had not met this one with proper self-possession.

„What does it mean to cry for the police?” he frowned. „Do you take us for thieves, ladies? Just step in with us to yonder jewellers, Sparkle, Rainbow and Co., if you please, and they'll tell you there, that this gentleman is Mr. Lansdale, brother-in-law to the rich Mr. Lee of the city. Will you take the word of the head of a Regent-Street firm in bail for a gentleman, whom you don't know from a cut-purse?”

Somewhat abashed by and by the two old dames from the country convinced themselves of their error. But they considered themselves with a foundation for the latter, which went far towards excusing their former mistake. The moderate crowd they had drawn together by their outcry

encircled the four parties at the door of the jeweller's used for referee, hearing out the good ladies' story, Mrs. Stephenson taking the lead in a deprecating tone:

„You can't look through a gentleman unto his heart and soul when you only made a short railway passage with him and scarcely exchanged any words. Often and often we've heard say that the London pick pockets affect quite the gentleman and won't be known from one by their appearance. So it happening that I lost my pocket with most my money in it and some little presents for a bride, all sewn up, and did it in the train, in the train I am quite sure — —”

„We were going an a visit to some nieces of Mrs. Stephensons" interposed Miss Diverty, opening the means for her companion to recover breath, „and knowing that we had to take the Great Northern railroad, having all respect of London and contact with Londoners, gentlemen, she sewed up the travelling money she did not immediately require and some little things in her pocket, having then only to feel for the pocket as a whole. We were suspicious as to who might be going by the Great Northern sometimes —”

„And soon we were corroborated," cried Mrs Stephenson with regained forces, „for from the time we stepped into the train, Miss Diverty and I — Miss Diverty being always with me in and out of home — I do not take my hand from the side of the pocket, for a young lady sits next us and a young gentleman in front, yet in the moment while we get out and descend on the platform, needing all our hands for our bags and things, — my pocket is gone. The train brushes past us when I glide my hand down my gown and discover that the bulky receptacle is missing. „That young man over against us" I cry out to Miss Diverty, „he has caught me while we swept past him," for I wouldn't say it of the young lady, wo looked

so nice and modest like. It has been her now it appears."

Mr. Lansdale with uncalled-for promptitude apposed the conclusion: "Somebody on the same platform did it, Mrs. Stephenson."

"Oh no, I was all attention then, and there were few people, no London jostle, sir, and no London hands. It was a small station, like what we are accustomed to and know how to manage with down in Warwickshire. It was in the London train I lost my money. The railway employes are trust-worthy, I am sure? The conductor outside the door would not rifle us? At present, venturing into London at the instances of friends, Miss Diverty with me, I meet this selfsame gentleman from the Birmingham tour and you must make allowances for my wanting to lay hold on him, the option of the case being only between the latter and the young lady. We had no more fellow-passengers."

"Mind you, ladies," said Richard, "that you don't seize on that young lady whenever it befalls that you meet her, with equal result as you did on me. That tour is returning vividly to my recollection through this occasion and I'd lay any wager on our fellow passenger having just as much culpability in your affair as myself."

"Obstinate old fool" muttered the gallant Richard, when at last he retired from the quaint intermezzo, leaving the two country-dames inexorable in their judgment upon the fourth passenger in the memorable railway-train from Birmingham to London. He was much put out by the unexpected episode, quite the contrary to Mr. Graham, who saw all the humor of the thing and wondered at his companions taking it in such bad part:

"It's a prime joke, Lansdale. I say, if ever you were a pickpocket, it was for having the lucky bone chalked your cradle. Are you offended with the old ladies? Cheer

up, man, it's too ridiculous — I never saw the like of it."

"Ridiculous and vexatious. Blackening peaceful travellers before a crowd of people for an insipid fancy of their own. A young lady, now that they have done with me."

"The young lady may be the person, for all we know."

"There you have it! So they find ready ears for their hasty asseverations."

"Oh, I'll help her out when I meet the young creature under the accusation. Such a pair of rum coves as we are, eh?"

"You'll have helped at the old ladies' persuasions" remarked young Lansdale savagely, measuring Mr. Grahams untrimmed figure, from his roverlike hat to his dusty boots.

But Mr. Graham expanded his voluminous chest and the brown waistcoat beneath it; his dirty, though well-starched shirt bristled up and said: "People know, that Robert Graham can never be impeached." No, he was known as a man who never would offend the law, as Richard Lansdale was a man who might be sheriff or alderman at the head of the law in his day.

Chapter XVIII.

The young Seamstress.

Thomas Larkes was doing well at Mr. Kenyons. For a quarter of a year he had performed his dispensers' duties in an entirely commendable way both regarding skill and rectitude. Mr. Clare considered him a reclaimed man although it wanted a longer trial yet for him to set up Allans protégée as an example. A great advantage in Mr. Larkes was, that he never showed himself a hypocrite, not overdoing his reformation after angelic patterns but

appearing just such a loose-shaped, freakish character as might serve for a study of a sinners real condition of mind. Mr. Larkes seemed glad to lead an irreprehensible life and this taste for it was Mr. Clares greatest hope; moralizing influences were infused constantly, but slowly.

In the Graham circle all was very pleasant now; not only on Allans account, but in Kingstreet and everywhere. In Mrs. Robert Grahams house they were so blithe and busy all these three months; Miss Maud was nothing but dimples and carolling up-stairs and down-stairs, merry tunes, sad tunes, melancholy tunes in sheer exultance of spirits.

Much needlework was being made ready, much conversation was going on, more tenderness than always if possible was shown in the family. This meant preparation for a wedding. It was the same when Ethel was engaged to Richard Lansdale; Maud had sung as blithely for Ethels going to be married as she did for going to be married herself. All parties were as well satisfied with the proposed match as they were then. The bridegroom in spé being quite the reverse of the former one, there was no drawing of parallels to make anxious friends uneasy about the conclusion of the engagement.

The conclusion would be in October, when the happy gentleman were to take Mrs. Maud from church and wedding-dinner on a late — season wedding-trip to the Lakes.

Who was the happy man? Remember the troublesome plans teasing Mr. Sidney Adams of a Sunday morning, sallying forth from Mrs. Lloyd Grahams door and say it is this same Mr. Adams, who in effect is now ever and anon sallying out of Mrs. Robert Grahams lightbrown door with its ring of a knocker.

The zealous city-missionary no doubt decided that the best way to reform a heathen or a heretic is to marry that person, which is a very efficacious experiment, though

alas very limited in its applicability. Mr. Sidney Adams made up his mind to try it upon pretty Maud Graham and surely did a meritorious deed. What squabbles and quarrelling there would be in the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Adams, how Mr. Adams would preach strict rules to his parishioners, and how Mrs. Adams would break them under his nose — that big nose of his, leaving ample room for her mutinies there. How he would find her doing all sorts of things on the sacred Sundays, how his good lady would laugh outright at any clearly-defined doctrine of his, quite according to the letter of the Gospel; that struck her, how she would disconcert him at his very sermons, she in the parsons pew and he on the chancel! How the Reverend Adams then would set her an example, such an example at home, and dine on curds and whey, on cold pudding or ham on Sundays, to keep the maid from kitchen-work, how he would have prayers on every proper occasion and reprimand all exhuberance of over-natural spirits and frivolity.

Or were they really to melt into one, as husband and wife are bidden to do, will Sidneys rigidity and Mauds sans-façon produce a neat balance together, effecting some description of concessions between them which will make both the better and the more beloved and honored?

A prophecy of this was in good Mr. Clares smile, when looking up one afternoon early in April from his desk, his darling Maud and his young friend Sidney Adams stood before him, a bright and honest pair, under the motherly wing of his dear sister, but an imperceptible trifle less joyful than when she gazed on his blessing Richard and Ethel one year ago.

It was worth the whole arrangement to see uncle Arthurs joy at it, for this comprehended all the sunshiny prospects it involved. He clasped Adams hand with the conviction of his having well provided for himself and embraced his

little Maud sure of coming to see her one of the gladdest and most gladdening wives of England. So all were the happier for Mauds bliss and the needles were plying merrily in Kingstreet, to speed her with a goodly trousseau from her mothers house.

Mr. Adams had offered his hand as soon as he could offer a modest living, to set up his household on. Which was another advantage of his doing a noble thing and suing for an obscure convert, instead of questing for a bride of better cemented piety, like the Archbishop of Canterbury's daughter, perhaps. Miss Maud manifested to have quite enough with a fine prospect of controversy and disestablishment of Sidneys orthodox tenures, for caring how the scenes of this domestic religious drama were painted. She was contented with anything Mr. Adams might be pleased to offer her, having the ridiculous whim in her head of wanting to convert him. She would make him play whist of a cosy evening and throw in jokes among the amazed members of his congregation!

"It's a shame my going to be married before my elder sister," said Maud, alone with Ethel one day and almost blushing at her own lightness of heart.

"Still that must be so," Ethel answered quietly, "as I shall never marry at all."

"Don't say that" cried Maud, "of course you will yet." Marriage being such an idea of happiness to the younger sister just now, and Ethel abnegating it so laconically.

"Maud, I am not such a girl as is wont to repeat weighty phrases with little meaning, what I say holds good for what it expresses."

"But —"

Come, we have to talk of your marriage now, dear, and not of any other. There's much to be done yet, which, if we don't get it ready as we propose must delay the wedding day we have fixed for you."

"Well, Sidney will be the most disappointed then; he wanted it in the first week of October to be able to take me to the Lakes yet. There'll be slides on the Windermere later on, I suppose."

Mrs. Graham was very glad besides to have her son Allan in Mr. Edyes nice establishment, instead of at Mr. Kenyons dusky old druggist-shop. Allans mien had certainly grown brighter, whether by the influence of Mount Pleasant or the serene impressions at home, nobody knew, least himself, fitting with his leisure occupation among the heaps of unhemmed towels and linen without seams, wherein the ladies were permanently ensconced at present, the young schemer asked of his mother: "Is there not so much sewing to be done for Mauds dower that you could well employ a needlewoman to assist you? I mean Miss Larkes of course, mamma, if you would give that poor girl a trial."

But Mrs. Graham recoiled just a little at the idea of Miss Larkes. Besides it was quite a point of pride with the ladies to see how much they were able to get finished by their own hands and diligence. However his mother attended to Allans request by giving him the advice to try Miss Larkes at Gwendolines, where the childrens frocks provided ample material for needlewomen. Young Mrs. Graham proved herself agreeable to the benevolent plan and gave favorable reports about the ticket-of-leave mans daughter after some experience, to her mother and sisters-in-law.

After Charlotte Larkes had been several times discussed in this way, Mrs. Graham one day said to her son: "I've told Gwendoline to send Miss Larkes here, once in a way, to see what sort of a person she is and as we have some few things which she might do. We expect her on Wednesday, so if you happen to go down town and see her or her father you may tell them the same."

Allan was contented to see his family take up Miss Larkes as soon as it found the opportunity. The young woman duly presented herself on the indicated Wednesday. Allans judgment of humanity did not go very far as yet, particularly as applied to common women like Miss Larkes, he regarded them with a gentlemanly hope for the best, but without devining what they were, not to mention what they wanted to be.

Mrs. Graham and her daughters were left to their own discoveries. Upon her entrance and the introductory words that followed, the young seamstress appeared somewhat confused and embarrassed. By and by she gathered more courage. The ladies conversed with her about her concerns to open a closer acquaintance with her. In the needlework Miss Larkes seemed handy and in her manners very ready to acquiesce in all that was demanded of her. Ethel bore herself towards the girl with a condescending benevolence, that came natural to her in treating with a person whom she not only meant to benefit but suspected of some possible moral taint cleaving to her from her unfortunate bring-ing-up. She kept a surreptitious guard upon the pickpockets child, as long as the latter remained with them and when Miss Larkes was about to be dismissed, having been arranged with to come again in the next days, Ethel intended to accompany her to the outer door. Perhaps, although Miss Graham did not want her to do so, the young seamstress detected the ladys distrust and resented her involuntary assumption of superiority — nevertheless she was exceedingly meek.

„You are very good" said the girl, when about to depart from her benefactors house with the orders for work given her to day, „I hope I shall do all to your satisfaction, whenever you find occasion to employ me. I have had practice at Compton House, where I was engaged for a time last year. You may ask information of me there, if

you please — because ladies like to have references about girls like me."

"Oh" said Mrs. Graham kindly, "the best reference we wish for is our own experience of you. My daughter-in-law recommends you, to our pleasure, as we desire all good for you and hope that you will always continue as you did until now."

"Something will always come to help you as long as you hold to diligence, Miss Larkes," said Ethel with moral application. "The deserving are not forsaken by God." "I never was until now, thank you. To-morrow I shall be at Mrs. Grahams in Wavertree-Road. I'll return here on the morning you have appointed. We are living entirely by your family's goodness and mercy, Mrs. Graham." The seamstress sighed and added a reflection doubtful of construction to good or bad augury of her thoughts: "Ah what a fortune to be in the position of doing charities!"

She spoke the sentence in a low tone, before leaving the room and was then led by Miss Graham into the passage. Somebody was knocking at the door at that moment. The daughter of the house did not however precipitate her step but waited for the housemaid to answer the call.

The visitor entering was Richard Lansdale. The young man availed himself of occasional opportunities to hold on to his intercourse at Mr. Robert Graham's by a thin thread, which he dreamt of consolidating through further opportunities into an admirable bond of aerial relationship, as poetical and novellike as his clandestine romantic love-affair. He made no way as yet with his proposed sister, but he on his own account viewed her in that light and set great store by his single-minded devotion. He was a rare character, he was indeed! Did he not hear it also from his friends now and then?

Richard had made an errand for himself to-day, by

contriving to convey to Mrs. Graham a greeting from London, from her faithful husband. He was back from the capital on the previous evening. A smile, that might have been able to reconcile Turkey and Russia if need were, played on Mr. Lansdales lips to meet the grave eye of his ex-betrothed. A pleasant exclamation perceiving her broke from the softening smile and then his look reverted to the second figure in the passage. It was all a moment. The short words to Miss Graham died away in a swift glance at Miss Larkes, young Charlottes last adieu submerged in her falling under Richard Lansdales shadow. She bent her head, made a hasty motion, but suddenly, by some change in her purposes or her chances, she lifted her eyes to the unexpected intruder and gave him one long, beseeching and eloquent look.

"Good bye, Miss Graham, and thank you a thousand times," said Charlotte Larkes in a musical, plaintive voice, as gently pathetic as she had not spoken yet and the sadness of early care settling on her forehead more obviously than it did during her introduction before the ladies, she turned away into the street.

Richard followed Miss Graham into the parlor. His words did not seem to come so readily as sometimes at first, but then he always had to study them a little under the embarrassing circumstances at play with this family.

"Who was that young lady going out as I came in?" Mr. Lansdale nonchalantly asked in the beginning, to say something in an easy, intimate way, perhaps.

"Miss Larkes, the daughter of that assaulters of Mr. Rosens, whom Allan found out."

Richard knew the story. Mr. Rosen had communicated it to him also and the young man commented with praise on his friends psychological experiments. They did not fall into his line, but they might aid his more extensive

schemes in the future. The end and intention was the same: charity and humanity.

"That was Miss Larkes?" cried Richard with extraordinary animation; than recollecting himself, he said: "What sort of a girl is she?"

"Not a bad one, as far as we know" replied Mrs. Graham, "she seems to be trying actively to earn her bread honestly and according to all accounts is very attached to her father. We have seen her for the first time to-day, but Gwendoline who finds her employment with needle-work is quite pleased with the girl."

"I am not, mamma," said Miss Graham. "I wish not to do her any harm with my opinion, but I have now seen myself why uncle Arthur is giving us such cautious answers whenever we inquire about Charlotte Larkes. She is not confidence-inspiring."

Richard watched the young lady while acquitting herself of this testimony; a new expression gathered in his face.

"So you do not like Miss Larkes" he murmured inwardly. "You have all a woman's quick feeling and scent your antagonist. You hate her, I well believe, poor girl, atrocious deceiver."

Aloud, he pursued the topic of Charlotte Larkes as long as he could dare to follow an interesting but irrelative theme and on the whole made as much account by his allotted half-hour as he could.

The term of his visit was nearly expiring, when Mr. Moffat was ushered in by the maid at this unwonted hour. Nor was it an idle whim, that caused the dishevelled music-master to surprise his friends in this manner. He carried the announcement of disquieting news in his excited, demonstrative mien. With few preambles Mr. Moffat addressed himself to the mistress of the house: "I have just seen your son, Mrs. Graham, and heard from him that something has happened at Mr. Kenyons, his old masters.

Allan was in a dreadful state about it — that man Larkes — “Good God, what has he done?”

“Has plundered Mr. Kenyon. A large sum he kept in the cellars — —”

“I know, I know, — Larkes stole that? He really spied it out — oh Ethel — Mr. Kenyon, Allan!”

“The lad came to me because I live near the place, to tell somebody; for me to communicate it where necessary

I have been already to Mr. Clares, to Mr. Kenyons — all is astir, yet what avails it, that adder escaped from Allans very grasp. These are the particulars as I have gathered them. — Poor Allan, he's raving through the streets in vain, I fear, prepare yourself against his return, for he was wild when I saw him. — Well, he came to me at halfpast eleven in the morning, with heightened color and breath heaving thickly as it does after running or from excitement. How did he come here at such an hour? I cried, I am in the pursuit of a thief, Mr. Larkes, who has robbed his master of his chief possession 'he answered me. — Allan, by a singular accident, had that morning been told to close his present masters shop, because of a death having occurred in M Edyes family. So, with a free day on his hands, the lad thought he would make a round at his friends in our quarter, go to Mr. Kenyons and see Mr. Larkes at work there, look in upon his uncle and myself. He took Mr. Kenyon first. To his utter astonishment, he found upon arriving there, that Mr. Kenyons shop was also closed, leaving open only the small wing that serves for admittance into the dwelling. Some groups of gabbering neighbours being near the place, Allan inquired of them if something had happened. Why, their discourse was just running upon that subject. Mrs. Kenyon had had an accident; Mr. Larkes had sent the surgeon, and gone in quest of Mr. Kenyon, who was absent

one knew not where, to advise him of the occurrence at home.

Now I will tell you what that rascal had done. The brazenfaced, abject blackguard! I heard it all at Mr. Kenyons himself. That morning, perhaps a quarter of an hour before Allan arrived, little more, Mr. Kenyon went down into his cellar, what he rarely does, because he generally leaves the task to the evening, when he has shut himself in securely. However, there always seems to be brought about such a flaw in every caution by one motive or another. The poor man shut the door of the chamber with the descent to the souterrains behind him, took a light and entered the hidden compartment where he kept an important sum of money. Engaged there for a few minutes, of a sudden a piercing shriek in the voice of Mr. Kenyon strikes on his ear. It sent a great affright through her husbands frame. Mr. Kenyon owned to me, that he never felt quite easy with that Larkes in his house. The thought of Larkes flashed upon him when he heard the cry. With one suspicion or another he scrambled all the faster up the stairs, having pushed to the secret drawer and grasped up the candle opened the postern and stepped into the chamber with the staircase to the dwelling apartments. Mr. Larkes was innocent. The poor lady had suffered a fall on the stairs, she was lying stunned and insensible at their foot, Larkes was at that moment rushing in from the shop, where he had likewise heard the call.

The two men took her up, ascended the staircase with her inanimate form and bore her to her bed. Then Mr. Larkes hurriedly departed in order to fetch assistance, as he said. Mr. Kenyon for about five minutes was so taken up by his solicitude for his wife, that he reflected upon nothing else. Suddenly the safety of his weighty treasure falls on his minds again. Leaving Mrs. Kenyon not yet restored to consciousness, but hoping for the doctor, the

old man disengages himself for a brief second from the bedside and head-over-heels regains the underground passage to make fast the bolts protecting his property. He had brought the candle up with him before and put it out of his hand on seeing Mrs. Kenyon's condition, but he did not remember that at this moment but only afterwards. The light was shining now in the cellars, when he pushed open the postern which was left on the latch. In his confusion he believed no doubt that he forgot the candle down there. He was making for the door of his treasury whence the light issued, when fancy, Mrs. Graham, the iniquity, the consternation — the insidiousness — a brutal hand takes hold of him, hurls the man bereft of speech by amazement and horror, into the adjoining cellar, a helpless heap of vain desperation, and turns the key upon him in the thickwalled, impenetrable apartment!"

"Mr. Moffat, shall one reckon on diabolical treachery like this to keep safe from such lost men?! And what did Allan do?"

"Allan, arriving very soon after these occurrences, went in at once to see Mrs. Kenyon. Larkes had called a doctor, shut up the shutters of the shop and informed the neighbors of the accident happened to his master's lady, declaring that he was obliged to absent himself from the establishment in order to advertise Mr. Kenyon, leaving only the boy in charge of the premises. The poor woman had presently recovered her senses, the doctor had attended to a slight fracture in her foot and otherwise found her in a propitious condition. She was missing her husband sorely however. On Allans making his appearance she was overjoyed, receiving him at the same time with her anxieties about Mr. Kenyon. The latter had been in the house within a few minutes of her fall, he had the intention of going into the cellars; Mr. Larkes account was that this master had gone out, not telling him where. Mrs.

Kenyon bade Allan look for the keys to the cellar, which were kept in some particular place. They were not there. Allan then ran down to investigate the matter; Mr. Kenyon, who could not make himself audible from his prison in any part of the overground room, was quickly discovered by the searcher and the two filled with haggard fear did not ask of each other whether the precious sum was stolen or not.

The infamous scoundrel, sallying out for the doctor, unquestionably was detained by the sight of the light at full day in the stair-room; his wanton instincts tended to combine that with Mr. Kenyon's entrance by the private door, to scent golden heards in the reputed misers subterranean department, to try investigation while there was an opportunity. He descended, found the doors left unsecured in the hurry; the old things wherewith Mr. Kenyon covered the secret drawer in the wall as a last precaution, to-day lay on the floor beneath it as a last and additional indication to the evil practitioners vulture eye.

Allan at once saw the singular advantage of time they had gained over the scoundrels probable reckonings by the accident of his presence. He only detained himself so long as to obtain a cursory understanding of the proceedings, then he dashed away to attempt the apprehension of the miscreant. He put the police in motion, and accompanied by a constable, repaired to Mr. Larkes habitation, deeming it not impossible that he should venture there, presuming to posses a respite before the peril of persecution setting in. The errand was in vain for the time being; Allan left the detective on the watch and retraced his steps towards Mr. Kenyon's. I don't know all measures he took, but the upshot is, that somewhere near the druggist shop Allan unexpectedly ran against the sneaking villain who was slinking about it seemed to see how the case was broiling out in his kitchen.

It was not much over a half-hour after the deed. Allan pounces upon him, like a wild cat, I suppose, a faint hope in him that the man has the spoil yet upon his person, a foaming fury in his blood, for what dire wrong had the delinquent committed in all respects! Allan says himself he was like a madman. Larkes defended himself and tried to shake off his accusers close grip. But Allans rage was stronger than Larkes' dread. They wrestled and the burglar came down on the pavement. The neighbors, not thoroughly acquainted yet with the actual nature of the doings at Mr. Kenyons, saw not the clear meaning of this hot struggle, when they hastened out upon the rashly-enacted scene. "He is a thief, call the police" cries Allan repeatedly. A darklooking man in the crowd intervened when a policeman effectually made his appearance: "Come to part a pair of boxers. There's a man maltreating another whom he has beaten down, catch hold of him." So that ass of a policeman did, he parted Allan from Larkes, Larkes gets on his legs with wonderful agility, the dark man from the mob is at his side and in another minute both elbow themselves out of the bewildered multitude and no one but Allan is clearbrained enough to make an immediate rush after them. But the policeman stoutly was holding Allan still.

Allan was aequainted with his policeman and this policeman with Mr. Larkes, he was a certain Peter Hughes whom he had had a little discussion with some time before.

"Don't you know Thomas Larkes?" cried Allan struggling with him, "pursue him. Don't you understand?"

Mr. Hughes however was for the moment taken up by the reflection on Allans violence and by a coarse triumph at the corroboration of certain prophecies of his made about the success of the Larkes trial. A second policeman eventually went in pursuit of the fugitive. Mr. Hughes kept exasperating Allan with something like this: "You

must not take justice into your own hands." Now his bolting is the fault of your being violent and taking justice into your own hands." That was the end at all events of the best chance one ever had to recover a deserter promptly after his misdeed. Larkes making good his escape so far Allan came to me and then went out again restless with impatience to have something done at least. Poor lad!"

"I don't know whom I shall be most sorry for, Mr. Kenyon who has lost his money or Allan who is the cause of his losing it, in an indirect manner," Mrs. Graham said much subdued.

"What a base return from Mr. Larkes" Richard commented. "It seems that you'll never wash a white man out of nigger. How Allan will repent of his generosity!"

"I wish he were home first" resumed Allans mother. "I long to talk the bad news over with him. Don't you think that Allan must give up the chase in person by and by, Mr. Moffat? It would be fruitless for him under the circumstances you have related. Larkes will take care to evade him, though I hope that the police will deal with him according to its especial sagacity."

"Allan will turn every stone in Liverpool first before he sits down and hopes for others to catch that bird of prey. He will come in when the day is out, I suppose."

Mr. Moffat was right. The longlasting summer sun was fading when the anxiously expected son appeared accompanied by his good uncle Mr. Clare.

"We have not got him, nor will we get him" Allan said, sitting down tired-out, near the empty chimney. "I mean, we will not recover the money, for I don't care what happens about that dastardly man."

"What an end to our trust, what an end to our trust" Mr. Clare repeated sorrowfully.

"Yes," cried his nephew fiercely, "I was thinking of that

when I was so violent according to that constables observations. He has given a new instance of a ticket-of-leave mans trustworthiness, to the wrong side. He has taken the part of hardhearted Mr. Hughes, against his fellows in misfortune, he is shutting honest mans doors upon himself and his like, where an opportunity was offered him to redeem his class. That's his chief crime. How he complained to me of employers prejudice against him at the beginning! Callous wretch! Mr. Kenyons money is the same as another mans money of course, to a thief — I can't fly out at him for that."

Allan stared into the grate, filled with paper cuts, with too much sombre excitement in him to tell of all his trouble al once. Yet I doubt not that Mr. Clares gentle spirit had worked already at the latter.

"What would I not give" said the clergyman, "that this temptation had been withheld from Thomas Larkes. He fell unexpectedly in with a chance, and accustomed for many abandoned years to use chances, his deluded instincts proved stronger than his possibility of reformation. Three months will not make a confirmed evil doer able of resistance against temptation, we might have known that."

Richard Lansdale, to show his concern in an occurrence that affected the Grahams to such a degree, having left the ladies very depressed in spirits in the morning, made yet a call that same evening, to tender his condolences and ask the result of Allans tidings. His sympathetic words were well chosen and his behaviour suggested that his friends trouble was felt as his own. His anger at the man Larkes, not only as he expressed it, but as he really experienced it was something almost approaching Allans, though maybe of a different nature. He pushed his comments not so far however as to touch the subject of the defaulters daughter whose acquaintance he had made in the morning. The sorrowful depression reigning in the family

extended itself fully to the brow of the sympathetic young prodigal exempt from care.

Richard inquired to what an amount Mr. Kenyon had been robbed. Astonished at the dimension of the loss, he could not but bewail the damaged party in earnest terms.

"This loss is my responsibility," said Allan, "Mr. Kenyon can not be suffered to bear it. I have stood guarantee for the person I recommended and I shall pay the caution."

"But Allan, how will you manage that?"

"I must get the money from a friend and pay it off as I can. Mr. Kenyon must be indemnified at once. He cannot wait long for restitution; I have time to settle account, I am young."

"You're a generous fellow. But the sum is a stunner. Shall I tell my father to advance it to you? For him it is nothing and among friends it ought to be an accommodating transaction."

Allan started as if surprised at the proposition of his rich and sedulous friend.

"Thank you, Richard, you mean very amiably. But I don't think of troubling your father. In case we do not retrieve the theft I shall settle my plans satisfactorily, I am sure."

He spoke rather easily to wave off young Lansdale; but the loan probably necessary hung heavily on Allans cares. That was what the first good-fortune in his career came to, contracting a debt of honor that would swallow it up wholesale in the best years of his eagerness and hope.

There was no help for it however. Mr. Kenyon was the first consideration. The poor mans haggard face and troubled excitement were in his former subalterns mind. The misery of his disappointment, the grief, the pangs of bitter regret enhanced by the nature of the confidential communication Allan once received from him, nettled the young mans heart.

There was his brother Lloyd to whom he could make immediate application in behalf of compensation to the pilfered druggist. „Lloyd is in a good way now and he would help me with the eight hundred pounds without a question. I would borrow it of him of all men. But is it not too great a demand upon Lloyd? Draw on his funds to such an extent, he just risen by his own industry? I would cause the least inconvenience by putting my case before Mr. Rosen, he is wealthy, he is generous. Mr. Rosen is the man who would help Mr. Kenyon and me most readily. Yes, in this case of necessity I must go to Mr. Rosen.”

There was not much consolation in his having decided upon this point, but when late that night his fond mother looked into his room to see how he had gone to rest, Allan had settled into a sound and tranquil sleep.

Chapter XIX.

Vanquished.

„This is love, this is your love for me?!” cried Diana Rowe in the dingy room at Mrs. Rutherbys. Richard stood before her. He had waited long ere he sought her out again after his journey to London. Nor had he brought her the present he bought for her in Cheapside. After having seen Charlotte Larkes at Mrs. Grahams he mused days and days whether he would go to meet Diana Rowe. At last a stern resolution got the better of him. He would once again speak his mind to the fair entralling creature and tax her fiercely with the appalling fact that Charlotte Larkes, the ticket-of-leave mans daughter, and Diana Rowe, his sly love were one and the same person.

Is the second figure annihilated by the first one? Is his

sweetheart run away with the relapsed convict, her disreputable sire? No, she is not, she meets him at Mrs. Rutherford's unchanged, prepared to continue her campaign, to outbrave his cruel upbraiding. She is no despicable conqueror, Diana does not cede from the ground she has won. Her colors are flying arrogantly and defiantly; hurrah for the girl, for Richard Martins promised wife.

Are you going to leave me, Richard, for being the unfortunate daughter of Thomas Larkes? Have you loved me for being the child of a spotless, honest man? For am I changed, Richard, am I changed?"

"I don't say that, you false, deceiving creature, but this is rather what you led me to suspect behind your mysterious, invisible father, behind the home you shielded against my inquisition, is it? You believed no doubt that I reckoned upon paying my suit to a low criminals child, herself of the profession too perhaps —"

Diana flinched for a moment, but she rallied instantly. "Say that again, Richard, say that again, that you believe this and we will never love any more. You shall be right in despising me, and I shall tear such an inestimable prize as your love into shreds and trample upon it, laugh at it, make sport of it. Say it again, man whom I love, you must have sound reason to throw such an accusation in the face of any girl who ever breathed in your presence, and breathed lighter for it, ah me!"

"I will tell you of one reason, Diana — ah, I must call you Charlotte now, I presume. My dear Charlotte, as to my daring to insinuate distrust of your private proceedings —"

"Not that hateful name, taunt me not with that other name. I have borne the name of Diana long enough, to think it mine without feeling that I practise a deception with it. My mother changed it for us, when she

blushed for my fathers signature. Can you fancy such elusion and forgive it?"

"If that were all, why not? Now, girl, I will tell you a little story." In brief unpitying words he narrated to her the striking adventure with the old ladies who mistook him for a pickpocket, which he had met with in London, making evident the application its particulars might gain by the discovery that his lady fellow-traveller in question was the scion of a cut-pursy professional.

"So I meddled with that good dames pocket, you argue?" answered Diana. "I cut it somehow, sitting there with my hands in my lap and you looking opposite. You would have given credit to the old ladies' opinion though you had not found out just now that I was a thiefs child. The facts are convincing, absolutely convincing." The hard raillery of her tone, a candidly satirical smile passing over her harrassed features staggered Richard in a suspicion, which he even yet was loth to accept.

"How shall I put faith in one word you speak, having proved so utterly false, Diana? Treacherous in daring to receive a decent mans overtures, without warning him of your origin."

"I have done wrong; I am glad even now that the truth was bolder than my courage. I did you wrong, Richard, but I did not think to do you harm. I believed your vows and protection would swallow up the history of my past. For I am innocent. By love and Heaven I swear it that I am pure. Now, Richard, my deliverer, thy glory, cast me off, abjure your promises, to visit upon me anothers guilt. I have not deceived you. I could not betray my father, I would not have dared to shock you with a confession in the painful timorousness of my love. Tell my high and noble wooer that he took the hand of a convicts daughter? Lose him? Ere I well knew how far we had gone I could not bear the fancy of it.

But could I have had the assurance, the audaciousness to leave my hand in yours, to let your lip meet mine, if I had felt so deeply unworthy of bearing a gentlemans name as to hide any stain of my own making? I am beneath you, — you are my star, my salvation, you always knew it was so. I am Diana with the hair you have called sunlight and the mouth you named your treasury. All this has been, the heart you have taken away, the pledge of marriage you gave, on my right hand." There it twinkled, shyly, wistfully in fits and leaps, the golden engagement ring.

"I told you, Diana, that in my home a poor and lowly bride would be well received. My father would cordially welcome his sons elected one, all the more approvingly for being modest and humble, but provided it must be that she were honest, and of honest extraction. As I am my fathers son I cannot present him a thiefs daughter as my wife; I cannot."

"You need not tell him my history. Accounts about a daughter-in-law can be given curtly."

"Do you know what secrets are worth, Diana? Ha, ha, have me well established with you and one day some old connection from your home practises a spite on us or your own father will be hanging perpetually on our heels. Better public the affair at once, send my expectations and heirlooms to the deuce, frighten society with the fame of my wifes maiden name."

"That means that you give me up, Richard? This is what all your vows, your professions, your caresses amount to, then? A fine love it has been, that promised to hold together through gladness and sorrow, through difficulties and pleasure, unto death. Death! arrive now then, to help me, and save my Richards word. Oh heaven, he said he loved me and learning who I am by birth, his love forsakes him. What a hollow, miserable thing it has been! Not

what I have called love, what clings to him and what he can kill me through. No, no, love is a thing much smaller and slighter according to his teaching. Love is not a thing of hearts, resting on words and looks, sworn to one and sworn for ever, it is an inconstancy that recoils at a horrible misfortune, it is a faithlessness that abandons its unaltered object, it is a cruelty that smites where it sees an assailable spot in its victim. I have deceived you, Richard? You have deceived me, you have told me that you had chosen me for my beauty, and for my manner of being and for my love of you, for life. But no, I will not reproach you so enormously, no, you mistrust me and think that telling a false name makes me false. in my womans nature, in my every act and dealing. I have sworn that it is not so, but what are my oaths worth?"

"So much that I will fain believe you and beg you to forget my uttering a supposition that I never yet adopted. I would not hurt you unjustly for the world, Diana. But my indignation is just, at your having lured me into these foul haunts, at your having told me a set of lies to ensnare me. This is an unclean haunt too, I suspect. Your account of Mrs. Rutherbys is falsehood, that about any intimate subject I urged you to give me is, so likewise, I am sure. You reserved the agreeable surprise for me of finding out your father in the act of newly confirming himself in his recommendable character. I the son-in law of Thomas Larkes!!"

Diana changed her tone; the desperate assertion of herself bowed down as it were to a humiliated strain of entreaty, of imploration, not less passionate, not less eager.

"You never have loved me, my own dear Richard, I see. But oh, have pity on me, have pity on me at least. Take me out of this life of misery, save me, I conjure you, for all that you have promised me. Oh Richard, be grand and be noble for a poor, forsaken girls sake. I have

given up everything in the hope I had from you. The truth is evident at present, look at the full dreadfulness of my distress. I have been bred near the filthy haunts of crime; since my mother died I have been surrounded by bad people, I have been hated because I hated them. I have met with no one who would help me in anything, if he could not make me useful to him, I have known only those who were jealous of me if I made my living somehow and spurned me when I could not. I have seen men, by whom it were better to have been murdered than exchange a word with them. I have had no tie to a better world, from childhood upwards, by my parents fault, I have only fiercely resisted to belong to that other world, until my looks proved my tutelar angel and your eye lighted on them. I was employed in the pantomimes as a child, for being pretty, I have served as dancer for being graceful, I have done sewing for being a decent girl. Playing and dancing does not last for an unprotected girl like me, who must fly when people presume on her destitution. Sewing does not last for ever, though I occasionally engage somebodys charity. My natural resources, they lie among my fathers darksome associates, whom he only gave up in this latter year to try and retract his errors, wherein he failed. With that great sum which he appropriated he offered to give me a superior existence to that which he had drawn me into. He came to seek me that day, that awful day, and he said to me: „Make ready and start with me on a new chance. I have money now to found an honest life for you. New people we will be where no one knows us, and we'll see what it is to build upon a fortune of eighthundred pounds as any respectable, thrifty father and daughter may.” — „Go alone, father” I cried, „go alone, I'll die rather than live on the curse of these eighthundred pounds.” He went away, but I felt not my utter loneliness and abandonment, for I be-

• lieved you near. I don't know if I may repent yet of my decision towards my father, in case you take your hand off from me, and I shall grow afraid of starvation and of my loneliness among man, as of the disgrace that has a hold on me from the past. My father at all events is my relation and will never leave me in absolute indifference and coldness of heart.

„Ah Richard, it is not long since I have grown out of childhood, you could have taught me to raise myself to your own station, no blot from the past would have attached to me to disgrace you in your wife, and my eternal debt of gratitude might have been a better dower brought into the marriage than many a ladys, my master and my love.“

„And a nice blur of muddy antecedents and obnoxious appurtenances you would clog on to my unsullied names, to a fame as fair and unreproached as any in the United Kingdom you would affix a shadow of disgrace and shame which one of my family has never been accustomed to. We are not wont to hide but on the contrary to show with pride the crest of a plebeian but unblamable race. The pride of my father would not brook the introduction of a member into the family that must deprive it of its vaunt of having no stain in its pedigree like many a grander and finer house.“

„And you have no more pity than your father would have.“

„Pity, Diana? You rend my heart with pity, with a thousand contradicting emotions.“

„Yet you make out the case clear that you must defer to your father and feel impelled to retract your promise. Pity! Pity from you! For me, me, who was told that you loved me!“

„I don't know if I do not love you always yet“, said the young man, resting his eyes on the face which for a year had held the power of magnetism over him. „But

marry you while my father lives — as long as my father lives I cannot bring you forward as my bride, Diana, if I shall not put to the stake the natural chances of my life and the best part of the future you hope from me."

„If you will love me still, Richard, if only your family, not yourself is against me, our marriage might be a secret as long as you like. I do not want to hinder you in your expectations, I shall not grumble at any lot you give me. The best part of the future I hope for is yourself, the glory of your companionship, the dear, dear reliance on your protection. Starve with you, you fond and tender as you have been towards me, it were ecstasy, it were paradise — me your wife, pure, honorable, highly-bred. To be for ever looking up to you and serving you by right of law and church."

„Perhaps you fancy starving with me pleasanter than it would prove in the tasting, my poor beloved — —”

„Fancy starving! ha, ha, I need not fancy starving. I rest solely on your generosity, Richard. Oh that I could die if you would not save me. I, who am innocent and who love you as no one ever loved you before, am I unworthy to ask to be saved by you?”

„No, beautiful and ill-used creature, I believe it, you have not forfeited the right of love over me. My dear, my own Diana still!”

He took her into the shelter of his arms with a raving lovers ardor, drinking in her sweet voice and winning features. „Look, I forgive you for having allowed temptation to make you mislead me” he whispered; „I suppose I must marry you soon for your having thrown yourself entirely on my mercy with your fathers desertion. If I could but gain an independency sooner than I see the way for yet and become able to defy a rich fathers despotism. Starve with me indeed, that is never the lot of the girl chosen to be my wife. We'll laugh at all our

fears, past and present, my pretty one." Victory! This hour of conversation with the unmasked London girl grew to be the culminating point of Richards enthralment. His love, his passion were always high, but now an allurement was practised upon his entire character. Long had he culled the sweet flowers of love, long and lingeringly, leaving matrimony with his questionable betrothed in an agreeably distant perspective. To-day he ended in bringing marriage near. A gush of generosity overpowered him, an image of surpassing virtue bribed his spirit ambitious of moral elevation beauty, brightness of speech and manner had pleaded in the beginning, but to-day distress of body and soul appealed to his goodness, falsehood and perversity humiliated itself before truth and honor, it kneeled to him, the king and proprietor of both. Save me! was cried out to him as to an angel; he came to censure a defaultress and she surrendered to his mercy. Be it the mercy of Richards noble mind then, be it the firmness of his invoked self consciousness that puts the seal on this romantic attachment.

The great Richard, whose second betrothed gives up a father with eighthundred pounds of fortune in the trust on his fidelity, while his first one will never marry for the remembrance of his love.

Chapter XX.

Brother and Sister.

Of Ethel little was to be seen in this latter time. As objects which one approaches are growing always larger, thus Mauds wedding was assuming more astounding dimensions as the first week of October was gradually drawing nigh. There was no end of things for the ladies of

Kingstreet to attend to, the circumspect elder sister being exceedingly much in demand. She was not to be had out of the house — the unlucky Charlotte Larkes never showing her face more in the sphere of her fathers fautor since that fatal day of accidents, no stranger meddled again with dear Mauds trousseau in the way of plain needlework, only a little dressmaker was had recourse to and Gwendoline was obliging in the business of bonnets, which she had a charming taste in adorning. Sidney was troubling about a little house he had fitted up in some ship-chandlery street near the waterside, genteel and respect-inspiring as compared to the lodging-houses of captains wives and the like. Miss Maud herself, ah, she was making rather the best of her last days of girlhood than being any assistance to the crowning preparations for her wedding.

Added to this, regarding the happy event itself, Maud had so many friends and two sisters of the bridegroom came from some rural vicarage in Berkshire, girls as far from prim as the younger Miss Graham herself, to perform the pleasant task of bridesmaids and encamped in their future sister-in-laws bedroom.

Then arrived the day when poor Sidney was supported by Mr. Moffat and Allan, when Lloyd Graham, in representation of his father, gave Maud away and uncle Clare spoke a heartfelt blessing over the two young people. In continuation a coach home and eatables and drinkables, then tears, emotion and a northward journey, very sweet — no teardrops added to the waters of the Windermere, I am sure, but many dimples and smiles of joy. The October sky very fine for the season.

Allan, tied down hand and foot with his debt of honor — sevenhundred and ninety seven pounds, for Mr. Rosen accepted no percents from him of course — was no dark spot on the feast of gladness; he smiled on Mauds inno-

cent happiness as he had ever smiled on her more youthful frolics, kindly and remarkably as an elder brother. He suited himself brightly to the opportunity, he always suited himself to Maud — the fulness of his own nature only came forth at Ethel's demand.

The happy couple dispatched on their honey-moon trip, the brides family were in a measure given back to a natural existence. Friends might again hope to see them. Linen heaps and jam-pots retired. Ever since the Rosen households return from its summer-sojourn at Waterloo, which was effected in September, little closer communication had been enjoyed between Ethel and Winifred. Yet that young lady took as much interest as any one in a wedding coming off near her. Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Adams, after a fortnight in Westmoreland, having issued information about their „At Home” in Liverpool, received in return some nice dinner invitations. Mr. Rosen was resolv-ed to give them a party, a grand concern it would be, by far the grandest they had called down upon themselves. The German merchant retained the especial liking he had conceived for lively Maud Graham from the first evening of his acquaintance with the family. He could not be deterred from giving her a splendid mark of his friendship. With due anticipation the cards of invitation had been sent in to all the proposed assistants at the gay celebration and the Osborne ladies were enjoined to manage the affair lavishly.

Ethel went over to Princes Park on the day preceding the entertainment, to tender an excuse for Mrs. Grahams intended non-appearance, who desired to remain at home.

Miss Rosen was especially affectionate with Miss Graham on the occasion of this visit, perhaps for having missed her after her return to the town mansion, perhaps for not being encumbered with the presence of the Osborne ladies.

Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Graham were of to-morrows party

of course, Allan too, whom one seldom saw for being very busy in town and studious over chemical and pharmaceutic books at home.

Richard Lansdale who came to Princes Park after having got his invitation for Thursday said to Mr. Rosen: "I'm glad of the opportunity to draw Allan Graham into company, he's dreadfully mopish of a rule now."

The socially-inclined merchant, not forgetting any kind plan he had once formed, kept true to his end of advancing the coy musician, Mr. Moffat, in society. After the curious break-down, that night of the notturno, Mr. Rosen opined that it would be the more delicate way of testifying his interest, not to draw him again for the present into any musical performance at his house, but to affirm his unremitting friendship by having him among his guests at suitable convivial entertainments. The party in honor of the ci-devant Maud Graham evidently was one of these; so Alexander Moffat had to brush up his old frockcoat and make the best of his outer man among the throng that did not know his inner one.

On the grand evening of the dinner at Mr. Rosens the brother and sister who stayed yet under Mrs. Grahams motherly roof, one may well imagine were dismissed with much lengthier perambulations to the party than Mr. Moffat lavished upon himself before his lonely mirror. Mrs. Graham issued with her daughter from the dressing apartment, convinced that no one in Mr. Rosens splendid drawing-room would look more to advantage than her darling Ethel. The young lady's attire was but of a moderate elegance, yet modesty had not disdained to fix on any little ornament held dear as a heirloom or a keepsake, to pull out the tidy ruffle, to have the folds of her dress neatly arranged and to adorn her dark hair with some delicate blossom.

Then good Mrs. Graham turned a look upon her son, who stood ready equipped in the parlor. Had he omitted

nothing, did he have his pocket-handkerchief and his gloves? Why he hadn't put in the fine shirtpin she had made over to him from his father, and he ought to have done so for such an occasion. And his hat he was putting on before it was brushed, dear, dear, what a boy! She picked a thread from his waistcoat. She brushed the hat while he ran to fetch the pin. Don't tell me that it was not brushed all along. When he had done all that he was told, Allan looked a perfect swell. Would they think him so at Mr. Rosens? They were accustomed to well-dressed people there, you know.

„What a dear mamma we have got, Ethel,” Allan exclaimed, when they were on their way to Princes Park. „I wish that I could always put on a bright face if it were but for her sake; but ah! the weight of this obligation, the disappointment I feel at the failure of our experiment with this unfortunate man.”

„You must not take it so much to heart, dear Allan; as to your obligation it is contracted with Mr. Rosen, to whom doing a service with his money is not the least incommodating but absolutely a delight. I you did as he begged you and paid him back only after you had earned your little fortune and the eighthundred pounds would be a comparatively less amount, you would do him no injury.”

„I have to be thankful for possessing a friend in the position of Mr. Rosen. Think of my unhappy attempt coming home to a man like Mr. Kenyon, fancy there not being the rich gentleman to be called to the rescue in the distress caused by Larkes desertion! I know that this debt is no infliction upon any other person, luckily, yet I can never be in Mr. Rosens place to make light of acquitting it.”

„Lloyd for instance could just bear the responsibility for such a sum at present, I believe. Suppose you work on thrifitly and established yourself in business like him, you might in six years or so liquidate your obligation with

tolerable convenience. Whereas, if you work it off by small instalments at once, you will for long years never gather the means to establish yourself at all and the debt would intervene with your prospects. That is what Mr. Rosen meant, and I am entirely on his side, though I am your sister, for as sure as I am of your paying him off to the last farthing as little do I admit the justification of doing it hastily."

"There is one flaw in your reasoning, my love. You are taking proposed possibilities for granted. You may give Lloyd commercial credit for these eight hundred and many more in the future. Lloyd may raise himself to represent quite a notable house in Liverpool. But I am not likely to follow in his footsteps. Indeed I rather believe that I shall never approximately succeed like him. Am I not an unlucky hand? I must discharge my responsibilities as I have the opportunity and not defer to speculations."

"You are as clever and assiduous as Lloyd, Allan. I expect you to prosper before the face of God, to set up your own druggist-shop and have a family to love you — a dear young wife; you have such a tender heart, brother, that it may warm to any good soul yet one day that is sent to you."

"Ah, I understand you, Ethel. You are reconciling wishes and practicabilities. I suppose one does so oneself, before one detects the possibility. One hope of yours for me you have resigned in the course of time, I see, love."

"I have. I believe I am right. Let us not linger over it if we can help it but break those ideas clear off and turn to fairer ones, to more fruitful ones. She is Mr. Rosen's daughter and they mean all goodness in that house to us; Mr. Rosen is not proud and we shall not be proud to him. I yearned towards Winifred Rosen once because of what you told me, I respond to the friendship she professes now because I owe it to them."

“We are guests in yonder house, Ethel. We are guests. One thing more. I am Mr. Rosens creditor, not for money, but for kindness. For the money I would not be his guest, but for the kindness I shall never hold aloof when it is demanded of me to take my place as a grateful friend in his and his daughters scene.”

A goodly row of carriages had drawn up before the Princes Park mansion, when the brother and sister arrived. The high windows gleamed with festive illumination, outshining the other houses in the street; sparkling ladies and glossy gentlemen brushed genteelly over the carpeted stairs, chandeliers blazed with more dazzling glare than the sun, Mr. Rosen and his ladies had no moment of respite from their politenesses in the drawing-room.

The Osbornes had exerted themselves royally. The page and the assistant servants knew how the dining-room looked, with the silver plate, with the great covered dishes, with the wines, with the bouquets — they were tiny at that age — for the hero and heroine of the feast.

The flower of the combined acquaintance of the inmates of the household had been summoned, some dignified gentlemen and their ladies, friends of Mr. Rosens, some young-lady favorites of Winifreds, a reputable connection or two from the Osborne side, young dandies notable for enlivening a generous entertainment. Paul Bickering was there, Bodkin and Tumbledown among his cronies, first-rate judges in the matter of dinners and of vast experience, Mr. and Mrs. Bickering were present, Richard Lansdale, also an ornament to a party; a noble assembly in a word Mrs. Osborne and Georgiana might be allowed a thrill of self-satisfied pleasure on surveying the drawing-room, putting on at their bidding such a gorgeous appearance rustling with silks, winking with reserved wit, blushing with pleased greetings, heaving with a hum of gentility and cultivated amusement.

Simple people passing by outside gave a glance at the radiant windows, heard a faint rustle of the throng within, a faint chink of chinaware, saw a swift domestics shadow, and mused: „They are making merry in that house to-night and a luxurious affair it seems to be.” The well-satisfied master of the house will compliment you on the exit to-morrow yet, I am sure, Mrs. Osborne.

Chapter XXI.

The Scene in the Billiard-room.

They are all assembled in the dining room around the glistening board. Maud Adams looks lovely by Sidneys side, the latter a little stiff for a pity, but no, a sedate clergyman makes a nice counterpart against the frisky youths of other standing in society. That couple is the happiest of the round, by established right moreover. Maud sniffs at the dear nosegay, her husband does not at his, but he smiles at her smiles — it is delightful. Some of the company are in transport with the patés etc, some are transfixed with the conversation, some look up and down the long white tablecloth and take silent notes about the guests.

There were the two preservers of Mr. Rosens life, the one who modestly disclaimed the glory of the deed, the other, who remarked that life was not the greatest thing that could be saved. Singular observation, a true thought, nevertheless.

One of these rescuers so lofty, so easy, so fortunate, the other depressed by secret disquietudes, weighed down by the load of a debt, yet lifted by it as on wings, unconsciously, in the eyes of the master of the house. Winifred, in quite a removed place from Allan Graham, not bearing

that debt in mind like her father when a glance of hers lights on him, not glancing often his way, either!

Mr. Bickering senior was a very grand, self contained man, he had bowed to Allan that night as he did in acknowledgement of many salutations from his fellow-guests and had not relaxed his customary frown as he sometimes used to while doing so. Mr. Graham bringing up his son to his door in company of a policeman indeed! Vulgar druggist, he commented to his lady and Mrs. Bickering agreed to the sentence.

Their malicious son was Miss Grahams partner at dinner. Who is to answer for the fine coincidence? Mr. Bickering made the worst of it. He talked to his left-hand neighbor, wit and fashionable slang, he gave his partner nothing of his flush brilliancy, only he drawled out a story of the last drawing-room, at which one of his cousins had been presented, to amuse a girl who never had an inkling of a queens drawing-room, no doubt. He was languidly attentive during the progress of the banquet, as well as absently negligent to Miss Graham, he forgot to help her now and then to the courses, he obviously gave up the possibility of her being able to appreciate him.

Bodkin and Tumbledown comprehended the feelings of the wag, they knew that Paul Bickering the sparkling was only at the disposal of ladies of a certain chic. Allan sat just in front of the pair and looked pointed daggers round the urn with grapes and peaches towards his sisters partner. Mr. Bickering never saw it, though I know he felt it with an agreeable tingle. Richard Lansdale observed young Paul too and his blood boiled within him. He was irate at the treatment Ethel Graham was offered, he was the partner of Bickerings dashing neighbor. Only a heart beating high boils at the spectacle of an indignity being committed on a third person — Richard felt uncommonly animated with that agitated lifestream of his. They had

all to keep quiet though, these scions of civilized society at the general board, that clattered and clinked, looked into its plate and remained unconscious of this little by-play in its midst as you are of one hearts thumping in a crowd.

The ladies rose after having reflected their gracious forms long enough in the polished mahogany of the dessert-table, long enough to draw many an eloper after them up-stairs, to whom the table began to appear void as it was left then. Richard slunk in, Allan came up, a young martial-looking cousin of Georgiana Osbornes decamped from the sherry. Bickering remained, his waggish chums were sipping their real spirits out of the goblet, I trow, the edler gentlemen remained, Mr. Moffat remained.

Once more Richard Lansdale and Ethel Graham were moving in the same drawing-room, Mr. Lansdale wistful to prove her a particular distinction because of being furious with Bickerings courtesy. Ethel herself had made less account of the matter than the lookers-on, she mistook Mr. Bickering for a lazy churl, in whom it signified little what he pleased to do. Did she listen perhaps to Richards voice near her, when her partner fell into a fit of absentment, did she see Richards form of all others pervade the glowing saloon afterwards, did she remark the high respect wherewith he approached her, cooled down as they were from former excitements to meet frankly and unembarrassedly?

Paul Bickering came up after a long while, very sprightly and able to answer laughingly his fond mothers surreptitious glance. Richard Lansdale began with zest to seek for opportunities of engaging Miss Graham pleasantly and of showing her any admissible obsequiousness. Allan studiously avoided coming within the compass of Mr. Bickering and several times made way for him on purpose not to be forced into a polite colloquy with the entertaining young man. Ethels brother was quite cool now and only acting pru-

dently, never having quarrelled with Mr. Bickering about any of his meannesses.

Down in the dining-room Bickering had left the company very lively. A great many toasts were proposed; first they drank the health of Mrs. Adams, then of other personages who were accredited to that distinction, while the gentlemen drank to each other as the humor came to them. The powers of some people only come out at this after-dinner sitting, they grow elated, valient and inspired. They say things which they would have held back before, yet which the company is all the better amused for hearing, their full ideas sway the conversation, without the spirit of wine swaying them. Mr. Bickering senior sat like a rock over the refilling glasses, he did not grow elated, he never grew one inch the merrier or talked the quicker for whole bottles of the fieriest. Mr. Rosens affability was exalted by the draughts. Mr. Moffats animation was rising. Bickering had set Tumbledown, a jack-of-all-trades in polite sciences to talk music with the violinist. The wag did it to perfection. The topics he artfully handled worked Mr. Moffat into ecstasy, Tumbledown was very intelligent and Bickering bewared of making him a suspicious character by meddling with the discourse of the two. Some other gentlemen were drawn into it, Mr. Moffat was really sparkling with the smouldering fire of his genius. Surprised and admiring dilettante gentlemen drank to him, the musician responded and plunged on into his subjects of interest, kept hot for him by Bickerings guileless companion.

At last the gentlemen judged the moment for the final break-up arrived. When they poured into the drawing-room, strengthened for an evenings exertion of amiability and brilliancy, Allan, retreated rather near to the outskirts of the saloon, discovered Mr. Moffat entering through the folds of the draperied doors, making a sign to him. Astonished he approached his friend, who beckoned him to

slide out into the ante-room. Mr. Moffat was a thought strange in manner.

"I am going home, Allan" he said. "Find an excuse for me to Mr. Rosen or when anybody inquires. I have been a thoughtless old fool, mixing up all sorts and quantities of wine over my talk without knowing that I did and disused as I am to the custom. My brain is weaker than it was. I cannot trust to being quite myself, give me some excitement and I'll make myself ludicrous. I believe the young men have been making game of me and succeeded to a degree."

He pressed Allans hand and retired softly towards the stairs. Steady enough good man, only he himself could tell that his nervous brain was reeling. He need not blush for the look that followed him moodily and long. Allan re-entered the drawing-room and if he never was striking in a company for social versatility, surely he was not after this quiet intermezzo. He tried to engage himself in dialogues with the least attractive members of the party, held in horror by the Bickering youngsters, he listened for a quarter of an hour to an elderly ladys tedious disquisitions upon country-house habits and county circles. He witnessed none of the honors awarded to his younger sister; suppose Ethel was in the bevy drawn round Winifred Rosen, he saw her not.

Later on the sedulous host called upon his guests to variegate the entertainment with a play at billiards. He gaily marshalled the greater part away to the billiard-room. Some made a few thrusts and went off again, some threw a ball lazily but dexterously out of the play, others looked on, others fell off into conversation.

Allan also left the drawing-room. Groups of the guests were scattered here and there in a desultory manner. At an abandoned corner of the ponderous table he leant with a billiard cue in his hand, having lodged a ball well

not long before. Of a sudden Paul Bickering hove in sight, Paul Bickering had a design upon him and came straight up to the place.

"Glad to find you, Mr. Graham. In truth I am seeking Mr. Moffat" he accosted Allan with a pleasant leer.

"Ha! are you?" said Allan.

"Yes. The full truth is, I laid a wager with Bodkin, twenty pounds sir, as to whether the old composer would prove obdurate against Bacchus at the dinner-table to-night or not. I did not watch him out, and Bodkin will not tell me the end what can you tell me of our friend?"

For one moment the blood rose from Allans heart in a whirl to his head, excluding every thought and consideration, he lifted his hand with the billiard-cue, — "Take that for your wager" he ejaculated frantically.

Mr. Bickerings figure staggered before his eye, it descended with a thud on the floor. Dozens of eyes turned towards this direction, a loud yell broke the tempered hum of the assembly in Mr. Rosens rooms, blood is staining the gay, the flowery carpet. The hopeful young wit lies beside the billiard table with a broad gash upon his puny forehead and never attempts to rise. Paralysed with consternation stand the members of the company present, alarmed by the scream in a ladys voice that rang out wild and clear, the rest are pressing in from the drawing-room. Only one of them all has rushed to the actual spot, Paul Bickerings mother is kneeling beside him in a dismal frenzy of affright. She raised the young mans head, she did a thousand things that occur to a distracted womans love over her wounded child.

Mr. Bickering, the father, looked upon the scene. His impregnable frame winced, his ruddy complexion paled. Mr. Graham had struck that fatal blow, said Bodkin, who saw the deed done. Many had seen the deed done, though they had not heard the words that led up to it.

"Will you order the ruffian who has done this out of your company?" Mr. Bickering addressed the horrified master of the house.

"The first thing to be done is to send for a surgeon" said Mr. Rosen instead of reply.

Allan had been pushed away from the place where the disaster was accomplished, but he stood yet in front of the gory spectacle, gazing upon it with fixed eyes. There was nothing for him to do, many hands were eager to render assistance, many feet hurried to fetch aid. Mr. Bickering lay on the floor, not responding to the exertions of his mother, the vicinity of his wound, his hair, the handkerchiefs that were brought to her who supported him redder and redder with every minute — his very life oozing out of him.

Ethel, who had been in the drawing-room when the accident happened, had come to the side of her brother as soon as the dreadful alarm spread about. "Oh Allan!" she ejaculated under her breath and then looked almost as rigidly on as himself. Scared families began to think of gliding quietly off to their carriages, those who felt themselves only idle spectators, those who judged themselves purposeless in the way. Ethel did not reflect upon moving, upon her and her brothers departure, she wanted to see that still form lifted, to hear a sound of reassurance from the wounded ones lips, to witness him recover from that benumbing blow and complain that Allan had rudely chastised a mischievous insulter. With happily little delay a surgeon made his appearance. He examined the hurt, gave hasty dispositions to stop the hemorrhage and looked ominously grave. A doom too terrible to be accepted lowered distantly in his forewarning sentence. Mrs. Bickering flinging an agonized glance around hit on Allans stony figure, watching and waiting in distracted inactivity. She

gave a shriek at the sight and screamed: „My sons murderer! He has murdered him.”

Mr. Rosen approached his unfortunate guest, after having received the surgeon and the surgeons verdict, saying gently with all the moments agonizing emotions in his tone: „For Gods sake, depart, Mr. Graham. Leave this scene, I will send notice to your house how things proceed here. You shall be informed of any change immediately.”

For an instant Allans petrification relaxed: „Thank you, Mr. Rosen” he whispered in a hoarse dry voice without lifting his eyes to his hosts countenance, then turning to his sister be said: „Ethel, are you ready? we are going.”

They went out into the cool dark air, in the light of the festive windows gleaming upon the autumnal trees and shrubberies of the Park, dancing over the winding roads, unextinguished by the mournful interruption of the celebration. Mr. Adams and Maud had lingered, irresolute what advice or address to offer Allan, but waiting for some result or dissolution of the ghastly position. They joined their brother and sister now. But Allan warded them shrinkingly off.

„Maud, Mr. Adams, let us go home alone. Please don't come with us to-night.”

Agonized, sorrowful souls haunting the streets this calm eve, bursting with as yet unbound emotions, penting up their electrified horror and remorse, their wails and sympathy. Yearning towards each other in the comprehension of a gigantic misfortune that smote them all together, true and loving hearts, yet walking apart in the fearful soreness of the others trouble.

Ethel looked once into her brothers face when they glided along, alone in the twilight street, and from that look she understood to say nothing to him. They walked mutely on, up to their mothers house.

Letting themselves in by the outer door, they saw the

light peacefully shining in the parlor. Allan pushed open the door not quite closed, leading into it and went in, Mrs. Graham, listening doubtfully to the steps in the passage, leant forward with one hand on the arm of her chair, with the work that had engaged her by the light of the lamp sliding from her lap. Allan walked straight up to her, and kneeling down took her right hand, saying: "Mother, I have brought sorrow on your head."

Mrs. Graham saw it at once in her childrens faces, that something extraordinary had happened. She looked down on her sons bowed head, then up at Ethel, then back. "Good God, what has happened?" she murmured.

"Allan has hurt a young man at Mr. Rosens" Ethel began with trembling lip.

"I have wellnigh slain a young man who provoked me" Allan answered, lifting his head.

They told their tale by and by, the dire surprise that had dumbstruck Allan the moment after his deed, releasing him by degrees in the presence of his mother. During the way home, removed from that other object of his strained anxiety, the revolt in his conscience raised up in the young mans mind that meeting with his unsuspecting mother, who waited for them at home to see them back from an evenings gaiety. Who was to be made acquainted instead with the bloody occurence he had left behind him.

No sleep came into Alice Grahams house after that evenings excitement and agitation. No angel of rest parted to-days exhausting impressions from to-morrows vengeful menace. The minutes, the half-hours wore on; oh immensity of a night spent in sorrowful waking! Sometimes they spoke, sometimes the three sat silently over kindred meditations. Mrs. Graham and Ethel trembling for the tidings from Mr. Rosens house, Allan dwelling on his rash and fatal act, the thunderbolt he had thrown into a life of peace. The mother and sister breathed repeated fervent

prayers — he did not, if his whole mind was not a prayer and the cry of his heart: „Oh God, what have I done!” was not a tormented invocation to his Heavenly Father.

At about two o'clock Richard Lansdale came to them from Mr. Rosens. „No news” he said, as the three pair of eyes turned to the visitor with dread inquiry. „I bring no news for the better. The anxiety for Mr. Bickering is very great. Several doctors have been called in since you left. I have come to know if you think of quitting the country, Allan, to evade the consequences of this terrible accident.”

„Leave the country!”

„Yes, Allan, command us all, all your friends, if you contemplate escape. Myself, Mr. Rosen, my father — you have means heartily, wishfully given to elude the humiliation threatening from the laws interposition. Paul Bickerings father will visit on you the vulnerability, the — the loss of his only son, he will push the matter hard, he will run you to earth if he can rather than relent to any grace. The unfortunate peculiarity of Bickerings bodily condition has made the case at once a question of life or death — it drives the parents retaliation to the utmost. In the name of all that is dear to you, let us help you to withhold the vengeance.”

„I have not the least intention of that kind. Thank you for your zealous offer, Richard.”

„Don't let a delicacy of feeling, a shyness of pride hinder you to accept our aid, Allan. Take it from whom you will among us who desire to preserve you, who have the means easily at hand.”

„I shall never fly for any deed of mine,” Allan declared firmly.

Richard was bent on the resource of escape. He would not resign himself to be gainsaid by Allans superior sense

of honor. Disposing of the means to shelter him and those nearest to him from results of the action which his own sensibility could never bear to countenance he was an ardent pleader in what he deemed a friends duty. He was deeply shocked by the awful occurrence, with all what he had of heart he turned to rescue his young companion, Ethels brother, from the impending disgrace attendant upon a deed like his.

„Consider. Consider on your determination, Allan. You have time, measured time to protect yourself from disgrace. Think of your family. Allan, do not disdain my friendship for you all of the name of Graham, an old, old friendship. Listen to me when I say for your familys sake.”

Allan turned his look upon Mrs. Graham and Ethel. „Mother, is the determination I have pronounced not right on account of you? Will you be less disgraced by me when I save myself from justice? Sister, shall I hide myself from the responsibility I have burdened myself with?”

„No” Ethel said decisively. „You, Allan, become fugitive!”

„Not for our sake” Mrs. Graham answered. „And will they not see, my son, how this misfortune happened in a maddened moment, will a man of honor not be known in the midst of a visitation like this? They can never mistake you for a subject of contempt and disgrace.”

„They can draw him into punishment, Mrs. Graham,” Richard proceeded to warn, „judges may, as clear as fact, which is their sole rule of decision. The public and the judges who try him do not know your sons private character. There are important extenuating cirumstances, yet we cannot promise that Allan will not be subjected to some penalty, and such penalty goes as disgrace in the

world. Mr. Rosen had a hurried conference with me about this and he is as eager as myself to avert the risk."

„May the worst come to the worst I shall remain in my place."

Richard Lansdale had the decision of the Graham family. It did not waver for any perils and appeals he conjured up.

„In the case of my own offices being rejected by you, Mr. Rosen made me the bearer of his written message" he said after a long vain colloquy. „Mr. Rosen expressed a regret that he disposed of no opportunity to speak to you in person in these first hours of turmoil, but you have his sentiments through me."

Allan tore open the note. „My dear Mr. Graham, believe me to feel the sympathy this extraordinary fate requires for you, to its full extent. No hopes are entertained of Mr. Bickering. If you want to avoid a too heavy retribution for this accident, count upon my prompt and ready friendship. I warn you that Mr. Bickering senior will not be disposed to spare you for any representations that might be made to him. At a later period affairs may perhaps be more agreeably arranged. Let it alone be a choice of preference in you if you absent yourself or not. I offer no opinion but my best services. With unalterable regard and friendship

I remain Yours

George Rosen.

Folding the slip of paper Allan said to Richard: „You have heard our opinion and will please to communicate it to Mr. Rosen with the expression of such sincere gratitude as his generous friendship warrants. Receive them yourself likewise as I owe them to you for appearing as my friend in this hour, Richard."

„You are unshakeable in your resolution, Allan? You have pronounced an irrevocable determination? I apprehend the

more the consequences that will not fail to follow this ghastly night. We can do no more, my poor friend? You will add nothing, Mrs. Graham, Miss Graham? Then good-bye, the first thing in the morning we will let you know from Mr. Rosens again."

"We must await what will come" Allan said to his mother, when Richard Lansdale had left. "What will Lloyd say when he hears of this in the morning?"

On, on the clock is ticking through the still, the dismal night. Somehow the hands went on, striking the hours three and four, till it gave a buzz and a whirr for the hour of fine. Then Allan, whose gaze sometimes wandered to the patient timepiece on the wall during the interminable while with the lamp burning drearily as if tired and despondent, rose and said: "Five o'clock. This is not night any more. This is morning. Mamma, I think I may go out and walk towards Princes Park, to see how it goes on. I shall know what to do when I come to the house, perhaps I won't show myself. Only let me go out for a short while, out from this long waiting."

His mother accompanied him to the street door. He took leave from her with unordinary, lingering tenderness. "Mother, before any of the consequences are coming upon us, do you forgive me this wild precipitation, this deeply punished savageness?"

"Oh my son, my son" sobbed Mrs. Graham hiding her tearful eyes upon her dear ones breast.

With the anguished pressure of her fond arms around him, with a mothers fervent kiss upon his brow, Allan stepped out into the misty streets.

He had not advanced far from the house when a policeman stepped from some unobserved retreat to his side — the same policeman who came upon his shaking the roaring Paul Bickering to reason, that night when he wished to be the moons soft ray.

„I've got a warrant of arrest against you, Allan Graham,”
the man of the law accosted him, cautiously parrying a
possibly contemplated escape. „You know why.”

„Yes” said Allan.

„For manslaughter committed upon the person of Paul
Bickering on the preceding night. He's dead sir.”

„Dead!” Receive the pitiless intelligence, Allan Graham,
and repeat the awful word. You can utter no more, but we
can feel the magnitude of the blow upon your manly heart.

„Yes. He expired at ten minutes to two this morning
at the residence of Mr. Rosen in Princes Park.”

A LIFE-CONTRAST

BY

ARODA REYM.

VOLUME II.

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J Ü R G E N S E N & B E C K E R.

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THE RIGHT OF TRANSLATION IS RESERVED.

C O N T E N T S.

	Page
CHAPTER I. Retrospective	1
-- II. A new Success	14
-- III. New Prospects	30
-- IV. The Wedding-Trip	38
-- V. Footsteps in the Rear	48
-- VI. Mrs. Rutherbys Communication	65
-- VII. Bound for Australia	82
-- VIII. Startling News	97
-- IX. Mrs. Allan Graham	110
-- X. Hostilities	125
-- XI. The Letter from Coketown	138
-- XII. The Excursion up the River	149
-- XIII. Sorrow and Fears	166
-- XIV. The Patient	177
-- XV. A friendly Offer	188
-- XVI. Father and Daughter	204
-- XVII. The Family-Budget	218
-- XVIII. A sad Farewell	232
-- XIX. Shattered Hopes	243
-- XX. Various Struggles	256
-- XXI. Uncle Arthurs Prayer	275

Chapter I.

Retrospective.

We now come to the beginning of the year 1857. A dreary tale it would be if the history of the Graham family were minutely dissected during the interval between that October of 1852 and this time I indicate. A brief chronicle will sufficiently dispose of facts that cannot be ignored, yet are too sore in their nature to be indelicately obtruded on record by a friend of the Grahams.

Rest, recollection of a mothers heartache, remain, ye veils over her childrens trials of emotion, cover yourself, woful period with an edge of the ample cloud of melancholy that shrouds the Crimean war.

Should I have turned away and given an account of the Lansdales? Of Richard warmhearted in his commiseration for the grief of his friends, of Richard with perpetual sunshine on his own career, provided by a wealthy father and an indulgent nature with a complete order of success?

He led the life of ordinary nurslings of opulence — no demon lurking in his blood watched for the moment propitious to shatter the palaces, to shake the foundations of his fortune. No peevish stroke from that variable goddess menaced the chosen object of her predilection. Richard had bidden adieu to Liverpool in the intervening years, the elder Mr. Lansdale bade his son prepare himself for his own line of business after giving him the chance of

extending his experience in the cotton-trade seaport. Regretfully leaving his chief and friend, Mr. Rosen, young Lansdale obeyed his golden star, standing over hardfeatured grinding Coketown, where he was born a heir to manufac-tural wealth. Is it interesting to trace how Richard Martin Lansdale found his native city dull, how he made little escapades that astounded and displeased his matter-of-fact sire, yet were scarcely a discredit at his age? How he sighed for the departed joys of Liverpool, for holidays to revisit it and other haunts of his, how his mind was far more imaginative than industrious?

Such pleasantnesses and unpleasantsnesses are vastly monotonous, to tell the truth; there is but one puzzle in Richard Lansdales life, the like of which I have not oversufficiently in my own, and about that, history is silent. Diana Rowe has disappeared.

An even course of material progress. Richards friends see it before them. His mental progress? Who shall read it, how shall one read it? In many instances it requires divinatory power which no mortal possesses to study it fresh on the scene in action, on the living talking per-former. More than four years should work some change in a youthful character. Yes, there ought to be progress unto the day of death, we never stand still between the two, progress and retrogression suspended by the laws of Heaven.

Many dumb changes must be here — ah all is new and we strive deliberately to set ourselves right again. What has resulted of the great subversion in the state of things that dates from the desperate moment in Mr. Rosens billiard-room, when Allan Graham became subject to public justice and liable to implicate disgrace on his family thereby?

For long years a number of newspaper-cuts lay among a small collection of ancient souvenirs in one of Mr. Moffats, the musicians, drawers. They have been burned since, their

yellow shapes fell into ashes and these ashes were carefully beaten into tinier particles, into dust. The import of their letter-press was graven on the mind of their possessor from the beginning, and yet his vivid dark eyes had reperused it at intervals as if to try whether its sense would change with time. When the impulse seized him after a gloomy wintersday or an afternoon too glaringly fair for a restless temper, Alexander Moffat would stand before that drawer, fumble among its old sad contents until the first of the mouldy papers came to his hand, when he never omitted to cease in his rummaging to pass his look over the closely-printed lines.

„Manslaughter. On Monday the case of Allan Graham, charged with manslaughter of Paul Bickering was again brought up before Mr. Cracknell. The medical attestation having proved disfavorable at the first investigation of the case, much interest was evinced to hear the evidence of police-constable Charles Baker, who appeared to-day in the witness-box. The prisoner looked flushed in his face and seemed to follow the proceedings with much concernment, never once turning his eyes in the direction of the audience. Mr. Cracknell asked the counsel for the defence if he understood aright that he proposed to plead „Not Guilty“ for his client. Mr. Payne replied that he did, insomuch as nothing was farther from Grahams intention than causing the death of Mr. Bickering, as the deceased deliberately provoked the defendant and fell a victim to his singular corporal condition. Mr. Broadhurst interposed saying: „Was the prisoner unacquainted with the latter particular?“ — „He was acquainted with the fact, but it is easy to comprehend how it slipped his memory in a moment of excitement, very wantonly called forth, I must indicate, by a person of such fragile constitution.“ — Mr. Cracknell then demanded if there had existed any previous animosity between the deceased and the defendant.

It rather had the appearance of it from the latter's provocations having been invested with such a bitter spirit. One did not always feel impelled to strike a person on the head for his having tried the bacchanalian powers of a third party (Laughter in court). The prisoner admitted that an antipathy had existed between him and Mr. Bickering, but that altogether they had met very seldom. Mr. Bodkin who had attested for having seen the deed in the billiard-room perpetrated stepped forth to say that the deceased had always evinced great dislike for Graham, pronouncing that he desired to have him expelled from the parties where he frequented, although he did not know, added the witness, what cause there might have been for this feeling. — Constable Baker was then summoned to give his report. This witness deposed to having come upon the deceased and the defendant one night in last July, when the latter escorted the former in a state of intoxication. The prisoner was handling Mr. Bickering severely and the latter protested that Graham was jealous of him and wanted to kill him, all during the way to his parents residence. Baker, whilst coming up to the parties, who were causing a disturbance in the street, overheard Mr. Bickering discoursing on jealousy. Mr. Broadhurst inquired: Was the deceased very drunk? — Baker. — Just so much drunk as to tell his thoughts perhaps. — Mr. Cracknell. — Prisoner, what jealousy has existed between you and the deceased? — Prisoner. — I have never been jealous of him. — Mr. Cracknell. — But he has been jealous of you possibly, we hear; you must know that. — Prisoner. — If he was jealous of me on any ground, I can swear that this has not influenced my actions. I beg to be tried for my deed in the abstract, which has its sole origin in my hot temper to requite an offence. — Mr. Cracknell. — This will not do, you must answer for all the circumstances that are adduced to the case. The last evidence damages

you, because it gives precedents to your altercation with Mr. Bickering which you have not admitted. Constable Baker attests that the deceased spoke of a motive of jealousy and a threat of yours to kill him. — Prisoner. Ask those who know me if I am a man to utter threats of killing anybody. As to Mr. Bickerings jealousy I persist and shall persist that it is no affair of mine. My own declarations have stated the case as it is in full truth and I can add nothing more to it. — The prisoner doggedly refusing to give explanations bearing on Bakers evidence, he was remanded for a week. Before leaving the court Mr. Payne said: „Allow me to point out to your worship that the prisoners denial probably means the same delicacy of sentiment which originated the reservedness as to the subject of the provocation received, he manifested at the first examination of the case.' —"

This is one scene from the drama of the past. The judges who sat over a hundred cases of murder, manslaughter, larceny and forgery during the sessions and assizes, who sent several hundreds of convicted transgressors to the hulks, the gaols and the Australian colonies, were as sharp as behove their honor and as cool as might be expected of them. Their worships memorated from the codes of law, they cracked a joke to variegate the tedious discussions; they weighed all the damning and extenuating testimony, sentenced the prisoner to seven years penal servitude and clapped on their caps on Allan Grahams disgrace. The able legal assistance procured by Mr. Rosen, the warrant for Allans character reposing with honorable friends of his, the young mans own manner strange to deceit could not maintain the 'Not Guilty' before the witnesses who had seen Allan Graham violent, who had seen him do the deed, whose despositions induced to infer this and assume that. To Mr. Bickering M. P. no-

thing was left of his only son but vengeance, and vengeance the sweet he had.

At the same time that Allans case was before the jury, Thomas Larkes was taken up in Liverpool by a detective police-man and upon trial sentenced to ten years transportation. He had a twenty pound-note upon him at the time of apprehension which remained the only part of his theft upon Mr. Kenyon which was recovered with his valuable person.

Another scene from the past lies in Mr. Rosens private office at his counting-house in Castle Street. Allan Graham was removed to jail and Richard Lansdale had departed for Coketown. The latter after following out his friends trial left his place in Liverpool in the month ensuing upon the verdict being passed.

Lloyd Graham had called upon Mr. Rosen to inform him that under the present discouraging circumstances he desired to liquidate in stead of his brother the extraordinary debt the young man had been obliged to contract in the last year. The magnanimous merchant had endeavoured to wave this monetary question and to change the purport of Lloyds business-call.

„My brother is entirely set back in life by his misfortune, you must admit that the latter can but be very slowly retrieved, if at all. Under this consideration I think it were best for him to be his brothers creditor, Mr. Rosen.“

„Your brother being set back in life is no plausible reason for that you should be so likewise, is it, Mr. Graham? My young friend knows that his debt does not press here and never shall. His bond will sooner be burned than Allan Graham shall deny that I preserve it for anything but his glory. This debt is his honor, and you may well leave it to him, my dear M. Graham.“

„No, Mr. Rosen, my brother will not call this debt his honor but his obligation, much less his honor as long as

it be not paid. He may rather feel the deplorable protraction of its cancellation as an additional reproach."

"Your brother is a noble young man. Generally I find it greater pleasure giving money to lending it, but on his application I had fain to prefer lending it. However we have fixed no term in which the loan was to be returned. I adhere to my real creditor, my dear friend. Ah, they have treated him as he never deserved, but this shall not last but for a time."

"Don't say that, Mr. Rosen. I do not see the end yet to the consequences of this accident."

"Mr. Graham, if judges do not know how your brother is to be considered he has friends who do. My God, stood it not in clear letters on Allan Grahams brow that the deed was sufficient of its own punishment for him? The judges have worked for him like living pieces of machinery, which they are content to be. Let a judge walk into the prison-cell of the man he is going to sentence, let his eye be open and his heart warm in each single case where he meddles with a fellow-beings morality or fortune. He would then have found justice for Allan Graham. There are sentiments in a noble man which a despisable one could not utter and ideas in a cheater that can never pass for good."

"Thank you for your kind views, Mr. Rosen, but these are theories which you will never make valid. All his friends may perhaps not help Allan out of this pass. Public opinion or his own consciousness are probable to keep him down. I know my brother and have not the sanguinity of your generosity. Therefore allow me as one of the Grahams to clear this outstanding debt. We, the children of one home, one bringing-up and one love, to us our reciprocal means shall always seem yet as one family-good. I wish my brother had applied to me directly at that time, my property can bear to some extent being

drawn upon by him. Now if you will indulge me in this affair, Mr. Rosen, I hope you will listen to an arrangement I am most readily prepared to make towards the cancellation of Allans debt. I could effect it in about four years, if you please to agree to my paying two hundred pounds within the year, which I came here to propose to you."

Lloyd Graham pocketed his heart, so to say and drew out his bills and his notes of business. The cotton-merchant felt overruled to do the same — Allans debt passed from the hands of the man who would fain have benefited him into those of his kinsman who buried the days regrets in his ledger. The conference in its precision and shortness maintained well the character of that private business-apartment where Lloyd had sought his brothers creditor and friend. No sentimentality could possibly enlarge the dimensions of an interview with the elder of the Graham brothers — the two gentlemen parted with a pressure of the hand that bespoke the mutual and lasting esteem between them.

Lloyd was a man of few words and firm will; thus he walked steadily on in his beaten track, an honest, hard-working, thriving Liverpool broker, an affectionate unostentatious husband, a happy romping father with his flaxen-haired boys. His acquaintances knew of the cloud that hung over the family and did not wonder that the Grahams led a retiring life and saw few people that did not belong to their households or to business. Lloyds inclinations by nature did not point towards cultivating much society. It was no sacrifice to him when the gayest circle that formed in his house was constituted by his mother, his unmarried sister and Maud, lightspirited for all her grief, with her husband — all subdued by the same reflections, shrinking from being disturbed by the presence of comparative strangers who stood aloof from their sphere of thought.

A sad stroke had ended the careless mirth of little Mauds honeymoon, but one that tended all the more to prove the love to which she had so newly been confided. The disaster was sedulously softened as it hit on Sidney Adams roof — the youthful hope and briskness there caught it as it fell. — No stranger can betray the sorrow and mournfulness Allan Graham had inadvertently sown in his mothers house. It is enclosed in tenderness and hidden by delicate pride. Here the blow had hit most fully, here the fate was most perseveringly combated with. To hear plain, unmitigated, reproachful truth about him, the young man must speak for himself from a letter to his uncle Clare dated in the year 1855, some time after his delivery from prison on ticket of leave.

————— To you I can write all without restraint. Though I believe, dear uncle, that you bestow as much cherishing love upon me as my mother, I dare to confess to you, stronger and experienced in such things the fulness of my affliction, which I smooth over in my letters to her. The details would hurt the gentleness of my mother and Ethel. You know the station to which I have been levelled trough my fault. Oh dear beloved uncle, I read in your letters how you are acquainted with the most distressing realities of my situation by your using the right words to meet my emotions and raise my spirit under them. In your last communication you exhort me to let myself be assisted by the kindness of Mr. Rosen who has repeatedly made benevolent offers in my behalf. This has reminded me of the proposal I had, even while yet in custody, from Mr. Kenyon, to regard the old shop as my sure refuge in case I might be driven to extremities in my prospects. These are his words. The case has arrived. I shall return to Liverpool, uncle Arthur. I have tried to draw blood out of a stone and found that it could not be done. Having the resource of Mr. Kenyon I of course

humblly decline Mr. Rosens highminded advances. When I was set free my impulse and desire was to find a mode of living in some strange place and eschew Liverpool for my own sake and my familys sake. I would have taken to any possible employment rather than show my face in the old haunts as long as I could make my subsistence elsewhere. This was natural, was it not, uncle Arthur? It is not the shame of having had a number on my back that tortures me. I smothered the resentment that assailed me when first the keys were turned upon me. It was hard to bear, but had I a right to complain? The poor mother whom my hand has robbed of her only son — my own mother, my own home that I have tainted with sorrow and blame. I who was to have been my mothers joy and my familys honor like the rest of us. That picture of despair, those tears caused by me! — If I had broken a teacup in my headless fury instead of fracturing the skull of Paul Bickering I should have committed just the same crime. If he had not died the jury might have acquitted me. Would I have expiated my fault then as now? But the dead are dead and I cannot undo the grief of several years, although I would give my all to do so. I am sure that God will forgive me, but I am deeply wretched. I comply to come to L'pool because I am starving. When they released me from prison with my ticket of leave — ah the ticket of leave! — I sallied out into the country to search for a chance there. I fancied that I must be able to support myself, I believed that others were perhaps not resigned to do absolutely anything, like myself, or prematurely clamored for more than bare life, or gave their fellow-beings any other excuse for leaving them to go to ruin. In the prison other professions than my own had become accessible to me. I can no more persist upon my real profession. But with a desperate will to do the utmost, I found two cases

against me. The first was that no one needed my labor or had nearer claimants enough to supply him in preference to a stranger, the second was the suspicion attaching to my position, which the master of a peaceful homestead may but do his duty to regard. At those parts where I applied for work, they asked me where I came from and I told them. It took them all aback. Later on, relaxing in my scruples I only answered that I had vainly sought occupation at places which I named. I did obtain a situation on a farm — I was gaining a footing there when the gaol repute came after me. I had counterworked this damning shadow and recommended myself to the good graces of my employer, but his wife feared my passions when the intelligence reached there. So I even went to London, which I had rejected before, because everybody who wants to lose himself among numbers and dreams of employment which only a large town can afford, goes there to overcrowd it. I came to my father for advice, he perfectly knows about the opportunities of the capital. He received me kindly but bluntly refuted any expectations of progress. I have taken this sheet of paper from him to tell you that there is no help for me but to return to my native place. For special charity I have no right to apply, with the resources I dispose of at home. I wonder if other released convicts could fall back upon a clergyman or some authority before they starved or succumbed to the temptation of their naturally unsettled consciences. I have seen life from a side that makes me feel but too fortunate with the rest that is left me from a brighter time. Mr. Kenyons place is a boon to me. I shall not live at my mothers when I come to Liverpool, uncle Arthur, although my dear ones will never admit me to be a „discredit to the family.” What a sorry word it is, can not ones actions remain exclusively ones own? Down town, somewhere near the shop my being in L’pool will signify

least. I shall follow up this letter to-morrow, as I am objectless here in my fathers lodgings. How difficult it seems to live in my mothers town again!" —

Allan accordingly steamed into the bustling city of commerce on the following afternoon. He arrived by way of Goole on purpose to avoid the central Limestreet-station and a train more affected by genteely speedy passengers. An elderly gentleman singled him out as he alighted on the platform and came up to him eagerly but quietly. It was no scene that drew one transient look towards it, yet it was a greeting of the most touching that railway-platform keeps the memory of.

"I had not reckoned upon your coming to await me, uncle Arthur", Allan said.

"I'd have waited the whole day long sooner than let you make your return in solitude, my own boy. It would not do for the others to receive you here, not even for Mr. Moffat, whom I told nothing about it because he is so impetuous. But you shall see that love is glad to have you back for that there exists to restrain its welcome."

"Maud wanted to come here too", the clergyman continued with a light smile flitting over his earnest countenance, as the two proceeded through the next streets. — "I was at some trouble to cause her to desist from her idea. She objects to the constraint which you postulate for. Truly, Allan, if you feel tainted by the penalty you have undergone, you must cast that off before your mother and sisters."

"No, uncle Arthur, I am glad to have redeemed my offence in the manner which society adjudicates for such rashness as mine. When my term has run out I may meet strangers in honor again, as one who has fulfilled his incumbency. Only they whom I have injured and who forgive me, I blush to meet them."

"And yet you have joy in it too. Come, my boy, there

are but a few things more which I would mention to you as we walk along. — You will lodge with me if you are averse to join your mother's home again. This feeling is quite right, I think, and I have reconciled your mother to the arrangement already. Sensible as you are in your views, Allan, you will not despond of making the best of your return to your original condition. The place at Mr. Kenyon's will be quite what contents you at present and later on there will be new openings for you if it please God. You have all your friends of former times, my boy, so I am thankful you have failed to lose yourself elsewhere."

Allan's heart was beating high as they neared his uncle's house, the dear haunt of his boyhood and youth. Palpitating with subdued agitation too were the hearts within, watching for the son and brother so sadly estranged of late from the familiar thresholds. What a touching welcome home they gave to the loved one whom they had missed so sorely during the years of his absence. How considerately the faithful Martha came in after a while to have her share too of the general greeting. „Maud will be here by and by, I did not want them all at once,” interposed good uncle Arthur, „but we'll send Walter now to fetch Mr. Moffat.”

Allan was restituted to the station he had temporarily forfeited by his blind hotness. He quietly slipped into his accustomed place at Mr. Kenyon's, fortunate to abide in an atmosphere congenial to that of his subsiding fate, yet mellowed by the grateful attachment of his old master to him. Happy not to be jarred by contrasts with his mental disposition, glad to be unseen and unremarked. As he had committed a crime and yet had not, thus all was darkened in his prospects yet unchanged in the real essence of his aspirations.

A noble nature deeply cast down by a false step strong

as its gait in righteousness, fatal as the forgetfulness of its guiding line, but unbent in the sense of its good and its reliance on atonement. A proud humility never disengaging itself from the deed done, but ambitious to enclose it with better proofs of the soul that inspired it.

Allan, with the stamp of cruel agonies on his brow, irretrievably lost to the frank youthfulness his mother and Ethel had preserved in their image of him until his return in 1855, met them with love grown mightier during separation and hopes ripened into manlier constancy.

Like a passing chill of regret the irreparable outward change smote the fondness of the women who held him most near to their hearts, but the unbroken spirit in Allans carriage reassured their confidence in his future. He evidently meant to vanquish resolutely the deplorable combination of circumstances in his honorable life.

Chapter II.

A New Success.

Hail to thee O Liverpool, for Richard Lansdale of Coketown is steaming up to thy gates this frosty, roughwinded afternoon, February 1857. That means good; good to someone: nobility swells Richard Lansdales breast and beneficence is the shadow at his heels. He drives up to Limestreet-Station, he, excellent signpost of terrestrial moralists, bears witness to the case and prosperity that should crown the just. No reproach can be thrown on him from the muddy street and those who do not love him and adore him are those that do not know him. It is in the nature of things that not everybody can know him, but gratifying to say, it is never through any fault of his. No ungracious pride ever shut out from him any class or individual whose

appreciation of his qualities would be despised, he asks for the humble meed as well as he sues to earn the tribute of the great. Mr. Lansdale is almost a perfect man, view him from the point of his expanding social position, from the personal one of that swaying intelligence glancing out of his beautiful eyes, to that of the faultless suit pliant to his faultless figure.

Michael Lansdales son began where his father, hard-working, charitable, purse-proud, is ending, with the same luck, equal speculative genius perhaps, with superior charity, with loftier objects of pride. Richards brothers have got their share as the heirs of self earned wealth, but he, the youngest and the brightest is steadily unfolding his talents to be the glorification of the family success. His sparkling ornamental qualities have shown themselves to hang lightly on to his sterling capacities only, in order to lend an exalting spirit to the increase of the dead coin. He will make money the promotor of art, of philanthropy, of progress of every kind and in every branch of national development, he will make the power of money the arm of justice, equity and morality. This is a citizen after the heart of a thinking community; of the number who gain wealth and standing, few deserve it better, from the use they are making of it. Happy therefore is the place where he appears, for musical are the echoes from the steps of a good man.

Mr. Lansdale immerses himself for a quarter of an hour in the shades of aristocratic Adelphi Hotel, until he reissues into untempered air from one of its private apartments, the dust of travel shaken from his toilet and the object that brought him to Liverpool on his hands.

This object is matrimonial. At his stage in fortunes career it is not only natural but desirable that a man should choose the lady who were to complete the picture of human prosperity and blessedness. Richard Lansdale

never disappointed the expectations of his friends, and all the world opining that he has outgrown the bachelor state there he goes express to fetch the happy one elect.

So he did not marry Diana Rowe at that time, when against all obstacles and inconveniences it augured that he would. Or — nay, Richard Lansdale is not in secret a young widower, in silent sadness replacing the faded love of his passionate days? Does a Lansdale break his word? — Have not the noblest and the best broken their word to robbers and thieves? Has Diana, poor suspicious entoiler forfeited the claim to a given promise?

Who may be the choice of Richards taste at present? It is a curious fact that rich gentlemen are more especially eager for wealthy matches than poor people. It is very mean to marry for money and grandeur, more so, when one has sufficient means to subsist pleasantly and is great enough of ones self. Still merchants, princes, lords do it over and over again — they don't always admit it in open conversation, but they know they do. Richard was not mean, not before society and not before himself. He would not marry for money. For love then? Does a person who has fancied some dozen pretty faces know right true love from one of these fancies? When you repeat one and the same word too often at last you don't remember clearly what it means. So it may happen to sundry gentlemen out of books; the idea discourages me and I seek for a steadier reason that may lead the young hero in his weighty purpose.

The fundamental trait in Richards character is generosity. That is exudingly fine, for it always places him aloft of the persons with whom he comes in contact, yet it invariably makes him agreeable and sympathetic to these same persons. Thus Richards choice in marriage probably means generosity too, of course and properly a very delicate, muffled, reserved generosity.

The graceful guest of Liverpool was directing his steps to one of the haunts of old — to Mrs. Grahams in King-Street. Grave but kind Mrs. Robert received him with a warmth that contained the remembrance of the ancient family-friendship and the young mans appropriate behaviour at the epoch of her son Allans misfortune. The vision of becoming a brother and intimate friend in that house was left behind in Liverpool with other unfinished youthful designs, when Richard was called back to Coketown, four years ago. But with some latent affection surely Ethels mother gazed on the handsome man, whom she had known from a boy and followed with more than a strangers interest. Was there ever an error in Richard so serious, as to disengage entirely a heart from him, that once was tender on his behalf?

Richard asked after Miss Graham. She was well. Mrs. Graham inquired about Mr. Lansdale senior, and the rest in Coketown. Richards sister Anne had resulted to be of delicate constitution and was spending the winter with her aunt Ansted in Wiesbaden. Mrs. Lansdales ailments needed be touched upon no more, as she exchanged this life with another a year and a half ago. Her son readily paid the duty of a doleful sentence to her memory, but if reticence on the subject of the departed be suggestive of feeling, Richard Lansdales feelings were exemplary.

Mrs. Graham found it natural to talk of his mother to him, but as the considerations to be adduced to his loss were exceptionable she deferred to young Lansdales treatment of the theme with unabated confidence in his filial piety.

There exist proofs of his filial dutifulness which have not been brought out as yet.

Richard came back to the subject of Miss Graham. He had thought of meeting her too at this visit.

„I wonder that you did not see her already, as she has

gone to Gwendolines and you have probably called there this morning," Mrs. Graham said.

"No, I have not been to my sisters yet, the first thing upon my arrival in Liverpool I came here Mrs. Graham."

Richard, after speaking impressively, made a pause, to give his listener opportunity to mark the significance of his communication.

Mrs. Graham preserved an unmoved calmness however.

Richard proceeded: "My dear, my oldest friend, this visit of mine to Liverpool is intended to be a step of the last importance in my life. I shall tell you of my position and my prospects and you will see that there lacks in both but one item of decisive consequence. My success has no object as yet that would convert it into real happiness, no cherished end that I could look forward to. With my confidence in your faithful friendship, Mrs. Graham, I have come to you to resolve the first part of this situation. You must give me your counsel. My present visit has but two alternatives regarding its result: disappointment or hope for a momentous scheme of mine."

The speaker paused again, expecting it may be the assistance of an interposed ejaculation or remark from Mrs. Graham, but the lady only waited for his further expositions.

"I regretted not to meet Miss Graham here at once to-day, but finding you alone I do not hesitate to make immediate use of an opportunity which I else should have sought to bring about as soon as possible. For I have the purpose that impels me to desire a private interview with you very much at heart. Mrs. Graham, for all that has intervened since first I said the same to you, I still wish your daughter Ethel to be my wife."

Richard looked at his hearer as if she ought to be staggered and overwhelmed by his final disclosure. But though she did not reply yet and gazed at him in return in clouded abstraction of thought, she was neither the one

nor the other. Mr. Lansdale had still to proceed: „I do not believe that a misunderstanding of a nature like that which once parted us can revoke the import of our vows if once there existed real love. I think your daughter has loved me and has not changed with the lapse of years. I am constant too, only misunderstandings with ones self and one another have disturbed the alliance which seemed to insure satisfaction to many parties. Were it not well done to readjust it now and abide by our earliest conventions? What do you answer upon this, Mrs. Graham?”

„There is much to be drawn into consideration before answering what might be best. But altogether I should suggest that my daughter would be more entirely the personage to have your proposition laid before her than myself. My counsel can at most but act by halves.”

„The difficulties engendered by circumstances make you the person to be addressed in my exigency, if you will not refuse to be my friend apart from being Ethel's mother. I cannot renew my overtures while unacquainted with my former betrotheds state of feeling towards me. I cannot approach Miss Graham again without knowing that she still preserves like myself a lingering recognition of the tie that once bound us together.”

„I do not see, Mr. Lansdale, how you will make progress in the affair then, when you shut out the question which commands the explanation you desire.”

„I put the question to you, Mrs. Graham, dear mother of the girl who might make me happy with her love. You possess her confidence, you constantly read her mind, you can tell me if my fancies are vain or if I shall go on.”

„Mr. Lansdale, my daughter is of an age to decide herself every question that refers to her destiny. She will consider her own feelings, her family and what she owes to you and circumstances. I appreciate your attestations

of attachment to a family who has been visited by singular sorrows and the interest which I maintained for you since your boyhood has survived many changes, but in this present case I have to say nothing for you nor against you."

"Now my dear lady you speak without putting yourself into my place. Having once allowed the union of our wishes to be broken a great incertitude as to your daughters sentiments towards me follows, which implies a risk in venturing upon my proposals. A man is never prone to incur the possibility of rejection, much less so with the case standing thus. He will try to ascertain his chances instead of rushing directly into an awkward position."

"A lover argues his chances from the comportment of the lady herself."

"I have scarcely sufficient opportunity for that. Besides friendship adds such an important item to my relations with your family that it might confuse the auguries of love. Mrs. Graham, you do not lack confidence in my affection and integrity, that you so coldly hold aloof declining to aid me or to warn me?"

"I do believe that you love Ethel, for you are probably not obliging your Coketown circle with returning here with your offers of marriage."

"I assure you my father shall be pleased to receive my choice."

"That is a second point. I only mention my judgment of your declarations. If once your attachment lacked stability it seems not to lack fidelity on the whole and therefore no opinion of mine intervenes to discourage you. My daughters feelings alone can decide your suit and my daughters feelings are sacredly her own."

"This sentence is conclusive. I did not think a mother so far neutral in her daughters fate. I suppose I cannot

expect that friendship should outweigh this independence and lighten for me, the opposite party, all the difficulties attaching to a tender plan. It would be so easy for you, yes so simple, to spare us all a disagreeable moment, in case my offers were not desired."

Richard rather used this last phrase to startle Mrs. Graham into the pronunciation of the opposite conviction, than to demean his own persuasions as to the acceptability of his advances. Mrs. Graham was quite a cool hand regarding the good fortune of her child.

"Not less simple do I hold it" she answered him, „to put down your proposals where they are addressed. A man who loves must have the courage to risk his confessions face to face with her whom his heart elects, a subject so uncalculable as the reciprocity of such inclinations will never reflect disadvantageously on himself even though it be not resolved to his satisfaction. It is a thing between two and between two in delicacy it must and ought to remain. As an elder friend, Mr. Lansdale, let me point out to you that the sensitiveness which shuns defeat ill becomes manliness. You may please yourself however, my view of the case you have taken."

„Well" said Richard frowning slightly, contemplating the while the tips of his boots, „I do think that Miss Graham loves me and I am not afraid of taking an opportunity to speak to her in person. I believe in faithfulness." With that he abruptly steered the conversation into other, less confidential channels. His visit altogether far exceeded the limits of any but a very friendly call after a lengthened separation, with much to report of intimate detail concerning the interval past. He seemed just approaching a conclusion of it, when Miss Graham made her entrance after her mornings stay at Mrs. Lloyds.

She had become almost more beautiful than when she was six years younger. The self contained and stately

cast of her appearance better became a lady of twenty-seven than of twenty one. A pathetic dignity graced her who bore some deeply-hitting sorrows as only grander natures bear them. The color of her cheeks heightened by a brisk walk in the cold air, she looked very fresh and glowing-her surprise at beholding the unexpected guest and the moderate expression of it was a perfect opening of ladylike comportment. Richard who had been a little put out of humor by the rebuke received in his insinuations to Mrs. Graham was filled with an impatient zeal in behalf of the aim that brought him there on beholding his old love in the radiance of complete womanhood.

„Yes, I have come to see dear old Liverpool again” he explained his sudden presence to the new-comer „By-gone joys draw one back to former places. There is no happier period in my life than my stay in this town. All comes to an end, but sometimes there is a resurrection, luckily,” Richard rounded off the sentence with a grave and meaning jest.

As the visitor now deferred his intention of leaving and plunged with greater zest into conversation, Mrs. Graham left the room a little while after Ethel's arrival. A lull in the topics of discussion ensued upon her exit. Richard had bent his eyes on Ethel and let them rest there so long as was not admissible for good breeding without an excuse to follow.

He ended his fit of absorption saying: „I see no change in you, Miss Graham.”

„What change?” responded Ethel in hasty surprise at his remark.

„There are many things that might have changed you. Sorrow, cruel experiences change one. You must have suffered terribly under the undeserved lot that befel your brother.”

„We all have, but not too much. Some people exag-

gerate misfortune. As lastingly as we must lament the sad occurrence it may yet leave us very like as we were before it, only subdued by a severe warning."

"Warning of what?"

"To live always with the thought of good within one."

"You are approaching the ideal of a perfect woman, Miss Graham. It is as if your soul had ever held the foreboding of every sad or beautiful factor in your fate and with the unconscious feeling of this had ever been measured in its heavings to distribute its power alike through all your life."

Ethel smiled. "You do not paint me aright, Mr. Lansdale, the emotions of the moment possess me, only an original conviction must set them right if it is needed."

"Somehow you have been firm under tribulations that would have bowed down many. Miss Graham, as it was once it should have been my task to ward off and lighten your griefs, it would have been my duty to efface cares with happiness."

His former betrothed was silent in utter surprise.

Richard seized her hand, speaking with increasing fervor: "Ethel, in the thoughtlessness of earlier youth I resigned the privilege to cherish, to protect and be loved by the dearest and truest companion of my days since infancy, I appeared unfaithful to the prediction of fate, to the belief of friends and your fond heart. Yet I was not. It was the shadow of a mistake in feeling that came between us. As a man having gained the fulness of his reason I return where I once have given my word and beg you to trust me if you love me yet. Ethel dear, speak, I pray you, it is to tell you this that I have come here. Do you love me yet?"

"It was no question of my love about which we separated, we did so because the dissolution of our bond was at the time acceptable to you."

„What of that? When after five years in best development of judgment I strive to rectify that misunderstanding, allowed to pass, let me admit, by my wanting reflection, is it not a proof that my disposition is durable and sincere? You have done nothing to contradict my hopes, I gazed at you and saw you as I have ever known you and I could not help saying: you are not changed. Some change with time, you do not.” „No, I do not change with time.”

„You are not changed in your love for me; Ethel, my own Ethel already once, that is what I inquire for. You love me as you did long ago.”

„I do.”

„You do, my Ethel, I knew it. You concede me that, then all will be as I happily have planned. That foolish disturbance is undone and we have nothing to regret but the years and months we have lost from our original alliance. Let it be my task to weigh them up with all the tenderer endeavors, though you, Ethel, really were hard at the time that we parted. I think if you had but spoken in another strain, we should have understood each other even then, our love should have won and we should have been married long since.”

It was Ethels turn now to astonish Richard Lansdale. She drew back from his caressing approach, which he believed authorized upon the avowal of her love and said: „I have not granted you more just now than what I gave you as a parting word at the close of our engagement. Not I, only you know why our betrothal was dissolved and I never thought that you should want to reestablish it.”

„Why was it dissolved? Because you had an unfounded jealousy of your sister.”

„No, it was not that. You offered to marry me without assuring me that you loved me.”

„I told you at that interview that you were too exacting

and got myself into a disagreeable frame of mind. You will not be too exacting for me now, Ethel, for I love you better and stronger at present. If I failed to give you the assurance of my love then, I give it you now with an overflowing heart. My own dear Ethel, forget that unfortunate hour in this very parlor, surmount its unpleasant errors and grant me the fulfilment of a plan, which I have nursed with fondness for a long time again. I am too far removed from my youthful inconsistencies now to deal in any way with them but to abjure them. They are past, my love, and what they played with is what still remains, you should have no distrust in accepting it. Dearest, do not wound my feelings with holding back any longer, be mine as you ought if you love me."

Ethel's heart was yielding to forget that chilling disappointment which Richard once had caused her, to hold that his manly demonstration outweighed his youthful abandonment of faith. But still there existed other grounds for hesitation. Was it a warning or a doubt regarding the feasibility of their union?

Richard naturally despaired the softening changes in her face and pressed his suit with more determination accordingly. He was prepared to meet her present arguments.

"Ought we to return to the project of marriage with the reassurance of our mutual affection, Richard? Since our former engagement all things have externally not remained as they were. Although I shall never deem it just, nor you will do so I am sure, our name has been injured before society by the calamity that befel my dear brother. As your wife, Richard, I should necessarily be called upon to have intercourse with extensive circles, where this fact might act disturbing. The representation of an ambitious establishment, as your house may become, would not be advantageously formed by a lady with too sensitive connexions like myself. Exposing ourselves to general remark,

as we should be obliged to do, there might arrive occasions for you to be hurt in your wife and for me to receive reproaches which I could not brook."

"Let me meet him who will gainsay the esteem I profess to the choice of my heart before the mistress of my house. Let me read the features who remember the disgraceful sentence upon Allan before Allans sister in Coketown I will show them that a Lansdale abides by his opinions. Is that like you, Ethel, to give mundane considerations ascendancy over your love? I have thought of your making such objections, I have considered every point that you may raise and each reply that shall beat it down to make my resolution victorious. With admitting your love you have given yourself into my hands, for you are much too high-spirited to stop before minor questions after."

"This what you call a minor question, is your future comfort and happiness, Richard. I am too proud to bear a slight calmly. If anybody is uncharitable against me and my family, I cannot submit to it. At home, among friends, our sentiments receive their due, we are well together. Perhaps I ought not to venture upon more, not even on the plea of our mutual attachement, dear Richard."

Much more was said on both sides. They combated each others arguments right royally. In the heat of the action many words were thrown out whose sense was overlooked, many words were taken up with another sense than really was in them, and the minds of the parties were fighting about their seperate goals which only in their perspective looked like one. Who will weigh such matters? Fifty years after, ah, that is easy. Of course no difference in Ethels attitude would have saved the old engagement five years before, when Richard was bent with all his might upon Diana. Of course Richard would abide by

his opinion before the Coketown magnates, that he had fished Miss Graham out of a commiserable situation in Liverpool and was nobly gilding her with his own superbe ness. He had no doubt that Ethel with thankfulness re cognized his sublimity, which was only enhanced by his ignoring it and dressing it in discreet and delicate modes of speech. It is clear that Ethel never hit upon this view of the case, and with her natural singlemindedness only consulted her duty and her love. Yes, her love, it won the day, because it could not occur to her that Richard Lansdale should share common prejudices which she was exempt from. Her coolly practical objections surrendered to Richards protestations, Ethel listened to her great, ingenious love and for the second time, definitely, con sented to wed Mr. Lansdale, the fancy, the ideal of her life.

The successful wooer issued with beaming features from the first house of his visits in Liverpool. He had had more trouble than he reckoned for, or at least on other ground, but he had taken it all and reached his projected end. He had secured what he prized, love unquestionably, and thankfulness as he judged, to his future home. Just what Diana ought to have given him, only from a superior woman, who was well adapted to be the crown of his household. He might whisper confidentially into the ear of his nearest bosom-friend: "I do not mind whose sister she is, nor what attaches to her past, I do not allow my choice to be influenced by incidental objections, and she herself is a jewel whose worth I am proud to legitimate." What a character he was, how he held to vows which once pronounced were unforgotten, how we all ought to admire him for stooping to virtue which had got itself under a cloud. Richard has enough of worldly honor to add this immaterial glory also to the orders that adorn his breast. Friends, stand round and praise him from a

distance, Ethel Graham, step forward and take his hand, which he does not hold out to you but which you must grasp to kiss in grateful loyalty.

On the evening of that day, when first the sun had sunk upon the refitted boudoir, the two ladies of Kingstreet were on their way to Mr. Clares. Their grave and meditative faces showed that if the import of the preceding hours had been satisfactory, it was but a very tempered happiness they were accessible to after all that had passed. The fulfilment of former hopes was not a fresh flower of spring any more. — Upon arriving at the parson's house, Mrs. Graham went into uncle Arthurs study and Ethel, having been informed by Martha that Allan had just come in, ran upstairs to the little private room tenanted by her brother. They exchanged some other remarks before Ethel said quietly:

„Allan, I have come to tell you that I have re engaged myself to marry Richard Lansdale.”

Allans face fell, the flush of pleasure that was wont to greet his sister, subsided: „This is unexpected” he replied slowly.

„It was so to me indeed, but I think my natural impulses made it clear how I ought to decide upon Richards renewed proposal.”

„I never doubted but that anything of this kind was definitely annulled between you and Richard Lansdale. But you have deliberately given him your promise again and the matter is ended, Ethel?”

„Allan, you do not like him.”

„No, I do not like him. Least in the light of being your husband. I believe he wants feeling, depth, candor, to make you content and happy, I do not conceive what you take him to be for persisting in your old fancy about him in the full maturity of your discernment and sagacity. I should like to have warned you ere you gave him an affirmative answer. Now it is too late, I suppose.”

A spark of anger flashed into Ethel's dark eyes, as her brother concluded thus in desponded disapproval.

"I do not wish you to talk of warnings" she exclaimed impatiently, "I have lived to know that one does not cherish fancies but many of them are to be disappointed, — but not for that will I distrust the man whom I have loved from my childhood upwards. Love amends for many faults and deficiencies. No judgment but my own can help me in this case."

"Would to God that his love be strong enough to level all counter-arguments!"

"Allan, do not drive me into irritation. What I have decided I think done right. I am not glad and joyous over to-day's event like a young betrothed, but I have taken a great step which I assume just to us all. I will not listen to anything you may object to Richard, you must consider him as your friend and brother."

"Oh Ethel, how all will change now at home. What a different position you will assume. Well, that is the least, if only you are not hurt, if Richard is tender. He declared himself amply to-day, I am sure, or you would not have come to an understanding."

Ethel resented her brothers melancholy cast of comment. She had made allowances for a levity in Richard which once fell upon her dreams like a thunderbolt, she had admitted that mature reason overlooks what youthful romanticism stumbles at. She knew that many gentlemen would not have returned to her under existing circumstances as Richard had done although she only added the fact to the still unbroken links of evidence that he was a man worthy of her consideration. Having long since resigned the untenable idea of perfection she did Richards and her own enduring allegiance justice by promoting it into an effective combination of their earthly lots. Wish her good luck for her future, it promises as fair as many ladies never desire it better.

Chapter III.**New Prospects.**

Richard Lansdale had returned to Coketown to superintend some necessary preparations for his approaching marriage.

The accepted suitor and the Graham ladies had agreed to fix the wedding for the month of June.

Allan was intending to meet his family at the house in Kingstreet to-day. Dusk did not set in so early now, the lamps were just being lighted in the streets as he took his way eastward. Notwithstanding his quick pace he was pensive, musing on many points appertaining to the history of his circle. Among these there is a picture of memory from Mr. Kenyons druggist-shop, which must pass review, for it has all but resolved the question of young Grahams future.

Some time ago, Allan was doing duty in the establishment according to his unbroken rule of daily regularity, when his master entered with something extraordinary in his mien and gesture. The old man was not bent on withholding from him the meaning of this, he collected himself for a moment and then said in a vibrating voice:

„Mr. Graham, to-day I have absolved the last payment of my money obligation.”

The quick sympathy met him in his assistants features, something graver than congratulation, but as warm and glad.

„You know” resumed Mr. Kenyon, „that I brought them the bulk of the money as you gave it to me. I was so sensitive once that I never thought of stepping up to that mercantile office with anything but the whole sum for repayment. But I was not to indulge myself in that, my

pain in treating of the matter was not to be alloyed by doing with it at one stroke. I could not trust myself again with the watch, and ward of so important a property after the experience of that theft. It must have been best so.

The heads of the firm were very magnanimous, and they nobly strove to lighten my embarrassment during our transactions. They wanted to strike off the rest on the first occasion as if I had not been constrained already to make summary reckoning of the interest-money. My conditions being fulfilled from to-day I may look upon myself as a free man at last. What I now possess and earn will be my own. It would not be my own but for your exceeding fairness, Mr. Graham, your highness of views which insisted on paying guarantee for my loss."

"A loss you should never have incurred but for me."

"Who can say, who can say. And certainly it was a risk in our special case which I had accepted for my own. Now I did consent to your generosity in my great distress, — understanding that you had no pressing creditors and a fair way in the world. And on account of that, what I shall leave of property is necessarily yours, my dear friend."

"No, Mr. Kenyon, not at all. I paid a debt morally recognizable; I could never intend such a sorry trifling with your responsibilities as to thrust it upon you as another loan."

"No. It was not a loan, I know. But neither was it a real debt. It was a gift which I shall love you and esteem you for to the end of my days as Mrs. Kenyon will to hers. So, we being a lonely couple, having none more near either by attachment or kindred, we should like to leave you, Mr. Graham, heir to the little but the all we have in this world. We have lived on it for many years and you may do so likewise or add it to other

winnings of yours with the blessing of truly merited friends upon it. I shall make legal this bequeathment immediately, to satisfy my wish and Mrs. Kenyons. We shall see how we can manage in partnership or if I may be able to retire from the business in my later years. In case that I should be called hence before my beloved wife, I need not say that I am sure you will provide for her. You may always reckon on a certain competency to be derived from the business."

Mr. Kenyon did soon make his project in Allans favor legal and the younger apothecary considered his prospects quite kindly settled with this modest agreement for subsistence. He had now a security in his expectations, which especially one in his situation knew how to be very thankful for. The spirit in which this accommodation was extended to him, formed not less a source of gratification to Allan, who had a still deeper sense for the good-will of his fellows than for material services rendered.

When the retiring second son joined the family group assembled around Alice Grahams homely lamp, the conversation naturally soon took its drift into the future. Ethels removal to another sphere was at hand, the mothers last and dearest companion was going to leave the roof that had sheltered them all with sweet care and had been filled with their sorrows and joys.

"You must give up your lodgers, mamma, and come to live with me" advised solicitous Mrs. Adams, who found the idea of dwelling all by ones self intolerable. "You shall have all to your taste and be in your own house to all intents and purposes. Your son-in-law will make no difficulties, mamma. Do say that it shall be pleasant."

"Thank you, my dear, but I'd rather keep a separate house for Alice and the little one to visit their grand-mamma in."

"Then Allan must take up his abode with you again,"

said Maud, respecting the excuse based on the tiny Adams who were growing up around her „Or you with him, down town.” Mrs. Graham looked towards her son. „I think I'll remain in this dear old house of ours; I'll have a room in it for Allan and Ethel always and all day the doors of their second home open to my children and my childrens children. That is quite pleasant for a mother whose children have gone out of her care, yet belong to her still, dispersed into their different places for their happiness or good. In this is the pleasure of having you uniting in me here sometimes, as in the former days, Maud, my dear, which I should have nowhere else.”

They talked of Allans future afterwards, of the provision for his immediate wants, so affectionately made by Mr. Kenyon. The former had laid clear all his views about his position to his mother long before, and Mrs. Graham had shaped her plans and wishes accordingly, independent of Ethels brighter aspirations for her brother and Mauds conviction that he committed a sad error in living unnecessarily apart from mamma.

„After all, I hope that Allan will marry too and have no more claim on bearing me company than any of you,” Mrs. Graham said, her womanly propensity gaining the upper hand, in the course of discussion.

Allan could not help making an involuntary negative gesture.

„I wish and pray that Allan shall find a girl who loves him, Ethel voted with fervor, „to make him sue for the happiness which he appears so dull against.”

„Well, not just at present at least,” Allan observed laconically to end the topic.

Lloyds attention had been drawn towards the question. His practical mind set at work on the monetary considerations involved in the matter. „With small pretensions he can marry now when he pleases” the man of business interposed. „and I shall be glad to hear of it, that's cer-

tain. We Grahams are marrying people and find it pleasant one after another. You'll come to that too, Allan."

"There's rather much against my contracting matrimony, brother."

"That depends upon circumstances. Don't say it's a pecuniary complication. The lady fit to be your wife ought not to be one who regards wealth and as for the rest you hear that you are doing your family a favor with finding her out in time. All in good time of course, I understand that. Mamma, Gwen and I have been consulting about removing to a very nice house in Botanic View, which would be enlarging our establishment and coming nearer to you. I don't say that you'd prefer the street, but the premises would be an improvement upon those in Wavertree-Road and will do until we are getting very much grander, which I'm sure we'll do by and by."

Don't let that artful indication about your creditors flourishing progress pass by you, Allan Graham, nor allow your hairs to grow gray because of your debt, before taking unto yourself the comfort of a sweet and chosen wife.

Maud had come early that day to talk wedding matters over with her mamma. She did not display that want of joy at Richards reinstalment which made Allan disagreeable. Should she go farther than dear Ethels love and Richards nice good sense in coming back? Should the little matron be prone to distrust the success of matrimony? Sidney Adams had not taught her that on my faith. Yes, it was quite an affecting thing to lose sister Ethel, to have her vanish from her accustomed place, the friend into whose ear was poured each insignificant confidence, the perfection of the home from which she herself had more lightly flown, a little singing-bird to make its own nest. Ethel would be missed very, very much. Maud and her mother agreed about that and sat pensively together, the one thinking how that was to be made up for and

the other how it yet all was meant for happiness in the lot of her darling. But though there be a sigh for each vacancy in the parental house both ladies experience an inward satisfaction on the other hand. Ethel will disapprove of Allans clinging to an unlucky fancy, having been all the while pertinacious enough in her proper affair. Winifred Rosen will send in her wedding-cards one day, not the least doubt, although she had a lurking affection for Richard Lansdale. Only Allan can not find the point of view from which Ethels marriage should be found gratifying or his own desirable.

Richard was alternating between Liverpool and Coketown all during the months of the courtship and dropped in most charmingly on flying lovers visits. No wonder that he and Allan almost never came into contact at this period. Ethel could observe no relations at all betwixt her brother and her promised husband which she probably charged to the formers fault, displeased with his lack of friendliness towards his youthful companion. Allan was never yet a frequent appearance in Kingstreet. It is on the nuptial morn only that all is complete, that the sun shines brightly, that no face shows discontent and the Rev. Arthur Clare, not the officiating clergyman this time, will give his eldest niece away according to her wish.

The marriage bells begin to ring in our ears, the peal sounds from dear old Wavertree Church out into the green fields and the rainbowhued gardens of June. A very quiet wedding Ethel naturally wanted it to be, not a feast and frolic, but the simple tying of the knot that was to give her into the trust of him to whom paying her new duty was sweet. But though quiet and reserved it was a wedding in full style. Ethels raiments were of bridal white, the sprig of orangeblossom was gracefully fastened by a tender hand. The pure soft folds lent an especial gentleness to the firm lines of her beauty, the lifelong signi-

ficance of that moment before the altar melted her being into a hallowed emotion, into a silent tear. Away from the home of our birth, away into the realization of a dream — oh throbbing heart that disengages itself there with a pang of regret for all that it renders itself here with yearning wistful presentiments. Richard by her side in that place at last early enough yet to claim the full devotion of that womanly virtue, and proud to do it, though composed and impenetrable during the ceremony. Mrs. Graham constant to the old favorite idea yet that Richard and Ethel were made to be a pair. The young Coketown manufacturer had done what he could to equal her daughters fidelity, his amiability and his genius were in full bloom and it seemed quite an enviable fate to live with him until death us do part.

Little Richard Graham stared at his godfather putting the ring on the finger of his aunt, while grave doubts existed as to Berties being able clearly to identify the latter in her nuptial dress and veil.

With glad looks they all stood in the vestry while the two names were added to the register, ready for the embraces, the congratulations. Gwendolines boys remained in the doorway with Lilly Adams between them, meditating that a dainty breakfast at their grandmammas had been talked of and that the time of tasting it was drawing near.

An overcurious beam of sun was in the vestry, catching occasionally one of the assistants as he was taking up a position. How they had all extolled the sun that morning and how it teased them here! As if to say: 'don't think that good fortune will not trouble you sometimes yet without being overclouded or withdrawn.' Lloyd winked his eyes quite unworthily on account of the glare when he took his sister in his arms. Mr. Moffat as might be expected, took no notice of it, although he stood in the same dazzling light, when he saluted the bride with a friends

enthusiasm of hope on behalf of herself and her mother. Mr. Clare greeted Ethel out of the ray, so did Sidney Adams, so did smiling Gwendoline. Then Ethel went up to Allan, laid her arms around his neck and whispered: "Wish me joy, brother."

All his ardent, loving nature responded to her embrace: "I wish you joy" he said, the oftused words so full of their deepfelt meaning that her whole life henceforth might be replete with his tender wish. He held the whiterobed form tight and released it, turning to the bridegroom and shaking hands with him with the cordiality of a friend. Allans brotherly feeling went out to Ethels husband now, Richard received his short congratulation kindly and, of course, inattentively.

Richard was not brotherly — you are always above him, Allan, for some judges of station, and always below him for others — equal never.

There was no great clatter and chatter over the wedding-breakfast. Unfettered joy which is generally brought in against invading dolefulness did not preside at this meal. Allan and Mr. Moffat were habitually subdued at present. Mr. Clare knew that the family was not free to be gay though it might be permitted to be happy. Mrs. Graham gazed at the daughter whom she was to resign, not hers any more, only a visitor at that board. Not hers for the right of ensuring her peace, of having the justice of love done to the child of her care.

Soon the bride and bridegroom vanished, the mother followed, not to help changing the festive garments for the travelling attire laid ready — let us not call it thus, but to say the last words to Ethel, with the new path untrodden before her, all its flowers unculled and its thorns undisclosed. Words of anxiety for all that she thinks her daughter given to a fair fate. Words that tell how though she exchanges her home for another she leaves behind an

everlasting resting-place to her heart. Farewell, the young husband is impatient to lake his dearest property away into the world, kiss her all once more and say „God speed thee.”

Chapter IV.

The Wedding-trip.

Mr. Lansdale took his bride for that afternoon and night to Waterloo down the Mersey, proposing to start with her early the next morning by steamer to Menai, bound for a honeymoon-trip into beautiful Wales.

Not one of the gentlest rivers is the Mersey, a little arrogant maybe because of its close alliance with the sea, leading up all the fartravelled oceantossed vessels to the second best commercial city of the world. Not everybody keeps countenance before its heaving waters and the working of the steamboats wheels in the merry white foam and spray. Richard treads the deck like a victor, out in the real Irish Sea, but Ethel inhales the fresh breeze with desperate zealousness. This is not a tale of love but of fluctuant, inconsiderate, mocking reality. There is love in it and more besides. Where love is strongest and happiness purest, in young Mrs. Lansdale, it cannot keep on the alert with that queer rocking movement going on beneath. All the more does Richard make early exercise in being her protector and assiduous preserver. The advice he presses on her, the restoratives he brings her, the cloaks and shawls he huddles about! Fellowpassengers with their humor sound, gaze on the young pair with a smile, knowing, the sly ones, at what stage of mans career the gentleman is always hovering with anxious officiousness about the lady,

and the lady receives his services with such quick gratification even in the midst of distress.

In the afternoon they arrived on the flat shores of Anglesea, took rooms and dinner in the George Hotel and then went out to look at the Bridges in a composed frame of mind. That is to say Ethel was soon searching wistfully the opposite shore, the coast of the country she longed for not only because of its landscape splendors, but because each of these bore the footprints of Richard, who had ardently sung her the lore of his favorite resort. Richard lingered in the contemplation of the bridges over the straight, as a true Briton exulting over that fine piece of industry and modern convenience. He told Ethel something about Stephenson and tubular railways which was worth hearing in itself, being wellgathered information, though to the bride only worth hearing from him. Over the bridge they drove next morning across the Menai Straight up to old Caernarvon, whose venerable walls suggested rest, be the aged town ever so active and of undimmed faculties. But Richard was rather hasty as many can explain to themselves how, who find haste a satisfaction and all roads, lovely or desert the means of haste. A fortnights stay in Capel Curig was the final point of the wedding-tour and all the rest was transit in the estimation of Ethels conductor. Caernarvon grimly smiled in the rare sun as the two left it behind in the handy Welsh car, not conciliated by the ladys finding it a pity to leave it, as she would forget all about it on the delightful road they were taking. Richard only showed her the Castle in the capital of Caernarvonshire, and he showed her the grave of a faithful dog at the next stage of their journey. But he did something more important than this in Beddgelert, he showed his young wife to a circle of tip-top tourists in the fashionable hotel there, and caught up one or two admiring glances which denoted that handsome Mrs. Lans-

dale somewhat completed his habitual glory. His spirits were just a degree higher yet that evening and a trifle fonder stil the looks he cast on his wife.

"You were creating quite a sensation down-stairs, my love," he said, after they had retired from the general saloon.

"I hope not" Ethel replied.

Richard laughed. "They envied me dreadfully when I came in with you" he pursued. "And I want to be envied and am pleased to be envied, for I picked up a pearl at a place which they never could have found. To-morrow we 'll reach Capel Curig, or shall we ascend the Snowdon at once? What a time we 'll have in Capel Curig, the first thing to do there wil be to see the Swallow Waterfalls. I really think I delight in nothing so much as in those falls. You can watch them for hours. The leaping waters descending over the stairs of the rocks, drizzling down here, dropping rather hard there. The mountains and the greenwood as seen from the pathways hold still to be sung at, but the waterfalls are making their own poetry. There's Pontaber Glaslyn too yet, dubbed the finest point in North Wales — is it in truth? I don't know. If I hadn't had you, Ethel, I'd have contented myself with loving Wales."

Much as Ethel dissented when her husband began with the sensation and the envy produced, that gentleman won her over to an ingenuous smile at the end of his ramblings. It made one warm towards him when Mr. Lansdales eye kindled with his delight in beauty, with his sense for the high melodiousness of nature. He recalled all the attractions which he was acquainted with, all the charms, that were noted down in his sketchbook of former journeys, he dwelt on the description of elysium which had fascinated, of sublimities which had struck him. Happy to be the listener, happy to be the guide! O self-indulgence to

communicate the treasures of your itinerary map to another, O pleasure to enjoy what a dear one asks you to enjoy with him and after him.

„Can I mention such a thing as slate quarries? Travellers inspect them while they are at Llanberris. They belong to the Guide through Caernarvonshire. I know you always want streams and rocks and pinetrees. But I can't admit an indifference to the works of the nation, though you have the privilege of ladies, my dear, to care more for ornament and less for practical matters. The quarries remind me of an ancient fancy I have for Cornwall. I have never seen it. I wonder if it bears an apparent relationship to Wales. We must see Cornwall too one day, mustn't we? Don't hold back any wish or fancy of yours now, Ethel, they can all be fulfilled at present, sooner or later."

In what an easy tone he puts it, and how deep, deep, invisibly beneath it lies the vaunting consciousness: „I can give you everything; you would have wanted most enjoyments which I shall lavishly procure you, if I had not found the delights of magnanimity to outweigh the ticklishness of your latter past, I give you everything, my choice, my own, my captivating rose."

The question about the immediate or to be delayed ascent of the Snowdon was very simply solved the next day upon the young couple arriving in Llanberris under abundant gushes of rain. There was no outwearing the rain in Dolbadarn Hotel, as it had set in with right Welsh good-will, oozing innocently over the ridges of Snowdon, dripping from his sides, sparkling on his firs, and showing to no greater advantage than a magnificent slipperiness on his passes. He had put his head into a bluish vapour as if he must have a cigar somewhere on a side which one couldn't see. The Pass of Llanberris was glittering and dark, the grass on the sides very green and the tracks

of the carriagewheels like silver, be it only for a pool at the site of a pebble displaced. Well, then Capel Curig hove in view, comfortable enough and ample enough to shield one safely, as a Welsh rain is not the Deluge after all. They stopped there for days, and might stop there for weeks if they intended to be faithful to their plan for the Snowdon. Richard slackened perceptibly, in his appreciation for the water down beyond the garden of the hotel, impatient of the wet from above dancing to the burden. „No leading your bride up the, mountain, no leading your bride up the mountain.“

Ethel of course was to have a donkey saddled for her when at last the propitious day for the excursion arrived. But Ethel would not sit on a donkey. It was not that the poor little beast was below her dignity, but that Richard had made the ascents he told her of on foot and had consequently inspired her love-governed imagination with no other image than making it on foot likewise. So Mr. Lansdale was fain to submit and gained a point moreover whereon to vaunt his wife against those common parties with the lady folks clattering up on their long-eared chargers. The stay at Capel Curig was much better enjoyed after the visit to the craggy patriarch was absolved. Such definite butts as travellers generally have must be got over for bad or worse to make their minds easy. Sunny days came and lovely excursions, they prolonged the term of departure — they did right, it was prolonging the sweet honey-moon. Sensible enough, if it is not possible to make married life consist of twelve honey-moons, instead of giving it but one and eleven other months of doubtful appellation. Say they had four weeks of unalloyed happiness, Richard and Ethel; do grant them two more, give them six, good fate, that's begging like an importunate petitioner, but it is for a happiness so rare as to dare all to make the most of it.

By way of renowned Bettws y Coed at last they left the dear opening scene of their married life, and started for their home in Coketown, touching Liverpool once more, where Ethel's friends saw her bright in the morning hour of her new existence.

In the course of the railway journey from Liverpool to Coketown Richard, who had gradually become more meditative since they left Wales said to his companion: „I hope you will succeed in winning your way to my aunt Helens heart, love. This concerns me much, you see, for as we shall always stand in close connection with my fathers establishment it would not be of minor importance how the mistresses of the two houses agreed. Aunt Ansted is mistress in papas household and rules even himself in it apart from his business and his whims. She is one of the ladies born with a sceptre and though I always knew it and secured my own freedom I am not a rebel against the dear, good woman.”

„That sounds” rejoined Ethel a trifle sharply, „as if I had been objected to by Miss Ansted.”

„You two must meet before she shall say anything, my dear.”

„But you know that I am not sure of my welcome with her. I am glad you have given me warning so that I will not be abashed at first. She has been like a mother to you, I'll always bear that in mind. We are not quite sympathetic natures perhaps but we ought to get on very well together, I should think.”

„She was to have returned one of these days from Wiesbaden, as I learn from the letters I found in Liverpool. Aunt Helen considers me her property, in preference to the rest of my brothers and sisters, whom she generally leaves to themselves, and Anne to papa. This is irksome, but I fear we must put up with some irksomeness as an Ansted is rather a person of consequence in our Coketown circle.

„Will she interfere with us in any way, Richard?”

„No, no, but she will introduce you into our society,” she will give you a ladys advice in your novel surroundings, she will honor her nephews house with her attention.

„Ah my dear, I presume that I shall be able to manage in our home agreeably, be it without Aunt Ansteds help and with her attention upon me.”

„But I wish that you place yourself on a good footing with her, Ethel.”

„Of course, as far as is feasible.”

There lay Coketown enveloped in an indistinct greyish tissue, which if it was meant as an allusion to a bridal veil was rather a bad one. From the station they drove up to the parental Lansdale mansion, whose heavy doors were thrown open by a man-servant.

Having learned from the attendant that his master was in the study, Richard hurried onwards with Ethel on his arm to pay their respects to his father. Michael Lansdale sat in his customary brown-leather easy-chair, not far from him a little back, unexpectedly, sat Miss Ansted. „My dear father, I present to you my bride” said the son smilingly stepping on the rug appertaining to the manufacturers desk.

„I am glad to see you both” said the quick old gentleman, „we were just saying that you would be coming by and by. You look glowing and bright from your honeymoon trip, my dear. Welcome here and may you make my son happy, Ethel Lansdale.”

Her father-in-law saluted her cheek in a kindly manner, though sensitive Ethel inwardly reflected that the closing sentiment of his speech was somewhat one-sided in its expression.

Seeing that the first act of reception was considered acquitted by his father, Richard turned to the lady:

„And you here in the study also” he began with a

wonderful assumption of easiness and expression of pleasant surprise, when Miss Ansted cut him short, interposing:

"Yes, I have had a little conference with your father about Annes afflicting state of health and your marriage." — Coupling the two in equal voice and mien as if they were alike lamentable subjects.

"Ah, my marriage," Richard took her up, "you have heard but little about it hitherto, abroad. Please greet an old friend whom I have made Mrs. Lansdale."

Miss Ansted held out a stiff chilly hand to acknowledge the presentation of the bride. "Ah if I had only had a conference with you between your return from the continent and this meeting!" Richard exclaimed. "I beg your pardon for any offence given without knowing it. Won't you kiss my bride, aunt?"

"Kiss her!!" ejaculated Richards aunt, with such a demonstration of feeling in her tone and manner as she could only have allowed herself in the intimacy and negligence of home. There was that in it which struck the loving couple before her dumb.

"Anne is in the drawing-room, if you'll go to see her" Mr. Lansdale broke the dead pause. "You take tea here to-night, of course."

"You see" whispered Richard to Ethel, as he led the way to the drawing-room.

"I see" replied his wife.

She had expected that her husband would make difficulties to accept an invitation to the board at which Miss Ansted would preside. In two words she had received the prognostic of her life among Richards hard Coketown surroundings. But her "I see" may go farther than these, the short answer contained her stern self-reliance, no tender demand for support from the love that had brought her to encounter this position.

Richard mused how his sister might have been schooled

to meet his wife. But Anne, evidently on account of being an invalid, was not schooled at all. She rose, a pale, slender form, from a couche-longue when they entered. She put her arms round Ethel and said: "So, Ethel, you are my brothers wife. How beautiful you look together, you are both so tall and so handsome. It is so nice that you are married. Do tell me all about the wedding and Wales; come, sit here by me, Eth, sister-in-law dear, and tell me how it all was. I have been so tired of those German watering-places and longed to be back." Etcetera, etcetera, as Richard sometimes commented under his breath, when the thread of conversation was given to Anne. His sister was always a chit, let her add as many years to her age as she would; she fell to telling Ethel how her perpetual indisposition kept her from balls, kept her from amusements, kept her from seeing anything. She asked Ethel after her bridal dress, she noticed her travelling costume, she scarcely asked after her relations in Liverpool, not from any illmeaning design, but because she habitually did not go farther than the shapes of persons before her. She was very pleasant by nature, she could not have been disagreeable even if she intended to. And who intends to be disagreeable? Miss Ansted maybe.

Miss Ansted was thorny at supper. This latter was a very substantial meal at Michael Lansdales and it lasted long. Probably it had been made more savorly than was customary in that rigid household because of the expected guests. Curious to think of Miss Ansted ordering the dainty dishes, superintending the especial arrangements for a hospitality which she so resolutely set her face against since she openly declined to touch the lips of her young niece. The Coketown lady with exquisite odiousness ignored the new addition to the family, she was absolutely oblivious of her presence. She talked a great deal with Richard, about the time of her absence from Coketown

and of her stay on the continent. „And how have you found old Wales?” she asked him, proceeding to discourse about all their familiar haunts, as though her nephew had made a tour by himself there and she had become marvellously unconscious of its having been his *wedding-trip*.

In vain that Mr. Lansdale senior tries to be kind to his daughter-in-law, in vain that Richard seeks to draw his spurned wife into the conversation, in vain that Anne innocently prattles according to her childish inspirations, it was a miserable, indigestive, unappetizing supper, this carefully spread repast on the mahogany board of „Michael Lansdale & Sons.” Richard did know that he was served like Lucullus, although it was mockery to mention the reason why, Ethel did not know what was offered her though she ate it compliantly. No wonder if she made silent comparison with the suppers at home. At home? This is home now, or some stony mansion hard by, which the Lansdales have purchased to be a fit residence for the junior branch of the House. What does it matter that there is no one near but Mr. Lansdale, carelessly friendly, Miss Ansted, bitterly hostile, Anne insignificantly amiable, with Richard by her side? With Richard by her side unmovedly, imperturbably courteous, exchanging the questions and answers with his dear aunt which cast her out of consideration. What had the young couple to say to each other, when a few steps through the clear warm night had brought them under their own matrimonial roof?

„Aunt Helen was acrimonious on this first occasion” Richard commented frankly, having waited in vain for Ethel to speak; „but I trust we’ll make our peace with her.”

„As you have not even broken it, perhaps that will be enough,” rejoined his lady drily.

„Don’t be cross, dearest, though you have a right to be. I expected something of this kind, only that I did not imagine her displeasure would single you out alone.

It's no use quarrelling with her, take it calmly and let it wear off."

Ethel was not cross, only she had grown very quiet. She waited. Waited to understand her position by Richard Lansdales hearth. Her husband was greatly satisfied with her. It was wise to maintain a lofty tranquillity if Miss Ansted was to be vanquished without being expulsed and his sagacious mind did not conceive that Ethel missed in him the quickness of feeling and action which she was accustomed to among the friends in her former home.

Chapter V.

Footsteps in the Rear.

The family in Liverpool did not see Ethel again until Christmas. They talked of her and wondered how she might be managing in Coketown all during the summer months and the autumn days. Young Mrs. Lansdale sent letters often, but that was never like seeing her and reading a whole tale in her expressive face. There was less in those letters from Richards young wife than her mother had anticipated. Their contents were disappointingly insufficient. Now the first opportunity to judge more directly of Ethels new experiences arrived with the proposed Christmas visit to Liverpool — only now, as not a word had fallen respective of Mrs. Grahams being introduced to her daughters surroundings in Coketown. Had her fond maternal heart never hoped for an early occasion to behold the present scene of her Ethels life? Perhaps she had not, gentle retiring lady, at least she never said so to anyone. She only discussed with Maud the visions and probabilities of Mrs. Lansdales existence and towards Allan she admitted

with a sigh: „I should like to know better what her way of writing means.”

The busy stir for Christmas put Mrs. Graham into a bustle with unusual zest, for her eagerness about the expected visitors could not but dive into mince-meat and plunge into holly and scrub in the spare bed-room. Yes, there was a mistletoe-bough over the staircase, not to be evaded by any evolution on the strait ground, which if the Lansdales should not prove in a kissing humor was sure to yield a deal of lark between Lloyds and Mauds little ones. There it had hung for Mrs. Grahams own children, and there it was hung again as a due for the smaller generation and as a tender old custom for the elder one.

For a real holiday the Coketown pair were steaming over to Liverpool, leaving Miss Ansted behind them.

Somewhat of course the younger Mr. Lansdale had now asserted himself in the question of his wife. Some truce with aunt Helen, for it is evident that if successfull Richard did not incline for a boisterous altercation, things must have settled agreeably in some other manner. The wheels of his triumphal chariot were well gnashing the edges off Miss Ansteds prostrate temper, no doubt, the multitude not noticing her, but him with his beautiful consort, driving through the saloons of Coketown.

Richard was in most admirable holiday mood as soon as they set their faces towards the haunts of a serener recollection. Of a happier time, how the thought escapes one! Free from the duties of their majestic office kings sometimes feel as irrepressibly relieved when they roam away into a peasant hut. They have such pleasure in flourishing graces which cost them nothing yet make them adored. Richard knows himself withdrawn from vigilance and wisely acts upon the comprehension that the best way towards being pleased is to be pleasant oneself.

So glad all the members of Ethels family were when

the two arrived. But Ethel, was she not a trifle too glad at entering again the home of her youth, at embracing them as though she had long missed such friends? Should a happy wife be so passionate unto tears in her joy to be with her former associations again? Mrs. Graham from the first look in her daughters face learned that the high-wrought hope with which she saw her part in the rosy month of June of that year had betrayed her. She turned a glance on Richard: he was as amiable as ever. Allan as unfailingly detected that want in his married sisters appearance, which a brother is not welcome to question into. He was not surprised like his mother but in his silent thoughts he was the more ready to bring reproach home to Richard Lansdale in a sullen angry spirit

After Christmas-day had united the whole Liverpool family, Mr. Moffat as the nearest friend included, at the old home in Kingstreet, some very quiet evenings at Mrs Grahams followed. Of course the Lansdales had one day at Gwendolines and another at Mauds and Richard was captivating down to good Martha at Mr. Clares. But tender pensive hours were those for Ethel when no talk, no voices were in the beloved little parlor, but her mothers gentle familiar speech, when the room had its every-day appearance of the time that used to be. Richard indeed was by — well, if he had not served as much as expected for the completion of happiness he belonged anyway to the completion of the present. Ethel missed Allan on the contrary; she had hoped that he would consider those few evenings which she was to spend among them and come forth from his retreat down town. But the hours wore on till it nearly seemed too late to expect him. She expressed her desire on this subject and Richard, most attentive of husbands during this visit, actually volunteered to go down and fetch his brother-in-law to oblige his wife. He was magnanimous, he was exalted in his doings.

He hoped devoutly that he would attract no observation and meet no acquaintances while he rapidly took Allan over to his mothers. This instance of obsequiousness looked rather as if it were calculated as a special satisfaction for the ruffled feelings of dauntless Ethel.

Allan obeyed the summons of his brother-in-law and with undisguised impatience the two wended their way side by side through the protracted streets which they must traverse. They met no one they knew.

But did they observe how persistently somebody was walking behind them, just the same way which they took themselves, turning at the same corners, keeping just the same pace, having them steadily in view? Pat, pat those steps went, lightly, softly like a womans foot. A coarse tattered shawl was drawn over the head of the figure, a yellow sallow bit of face looked out of it when lighted up by the passing ray of a lamp. The eyes were in the shadows of the dapple folds of woollen stuff, but probably they never swerved from the two persons before, whom the woman persecuted. Yes, she followed them with a will and intent, she was no chance companion of their course. She wanted to know the end of their walk no doubt, she did not seem to propose accosting them. Richard and Allan were drawing near their destination, round the next corner lay Mrs. Grahams house.

As if with the presentiment of this, the woman drew nearer to the gentlemen.

They turned the corner, their undiscovered persecutor was within two or three paces upon them. They stood on Mrs. Grahams doorstep and touched the door which was already held ajar by the attendant maid-servant the woman stood upon the doorstep too and brushed against them from behind with a bold assured movement.

Richard entered first by the opened door.

Pushing Allan aside by an unceremonius piece of elbow-

ing, the determined follower from the streets also penetrated into the passage.

"I am coming in with you" said the creature. "Ah dear how dark it is in here. Step out for a moment again." Immediately by Mrs. Grahams window was a street-lamp shedding a patch of ruddy brilliancy down from its height upon the pavement. The blinds of the parlor were drawn. Richard mechanically followed his accoster for two or three steps and gazed at her blankly, she seeking the glare of the gas-flame and looking back at him. The thick shawl was thrown back upon her shoulders, an inward excitement more than the hurry of the walk had struck her faded complexion into burning fire. A pair of blue eyes glowed with hate or fury as if they were red hot coals. A mass of tangled palegold hair glittered around her like the remnant of a fairness for which she might once have been shaped.

"Well, Richard," said the stranger in a clear taunting tone, "does it not interest you to see me again?"

She cast a glance upon Allan, standing upon the pavement yet, looking on at the strange scene in dumb amazement. He saw Richard Lansdale start and turn pale before the importune woman, and in this person herself he recognized the girl Charlotte Larkes, whom he had lost sight of for several years. Her manner filled him with a rush of undefined fears, as though she had come, a revengeful fury from some concealed epoch of the past to break the peace at present. He heard a gentle strain of music in his mothers parlor; Ethels hands were going over the keys of the disused piano, shutting out the sound of this tramps ill-omened interposition, thank God.

The girl Charlotte or Diana, having enjoyed her own identification, with lithe movement returned close to the side of Richard. The latter in the meantime had taken resolution to plant himself firmly before the door leading

into the house. His manner was that of a man determinedly on the defensive against disagreeable events and it was, in the way of its precaution, guilty.

„I wish to enter now“ Diana reiterated.

„Do you dare to speak thus, you bold creature?“ replied Richard.

She laughed, hardly and shortly, to answer him all the quicker: „Of course I dare. People are daring when they have nothing to lose. There's nothing so daring in going up to a door and asking for admittance. If one only has some business to do so, they will admit one.“

„You may tell your business here. If you want some money you may have it, but I warn you, take care what sort of a business you have with me. Take care!“ he repeated, as if grasping for some intimidation that should stop her before she caused trouble by any possible chance.

„Not so, I wish to see your wife, Richard. It won't do here. I will come in.“

„My wife is not here“ faltered Richard. „Be off and consider that your audaciousness can avail you nothing.“

„Your wife is not in there? I should think she was. Nor is she in Liverpool at all?“

„Not here and not in Liverpool nor in reach of you at all.“

She led him on with his fib. „She is in Coketown then?“ Diana questioned penetratively.

„Probably. It is no concern of yours. Will you leave us now?“

„That's what you would like of all things!“ Diana laughed, then she turned to Allan with her inquiry: „I don't believe him, your sister is here, Mr. Graham, is she not?“

„For Gods sake, if you persist in speaking to Mr. Lansdale and have some particular claim to be heard by him, let us move on to a little distance. Don't disturb

my mother with your wild talk. Perhaps we shall arrive at some understanding, without behaving in such a strange manner on Mrs. Grahams doorstep."

He took her by the arm and drew her away, gently, yet with the decisive force of desperation, with the reckless determination of his apprehension for Ethel Lansdales peace of mind. The girl actually allowed herself to be dragged away round the corner by him, Richard following in sullen compliance. Proof upon proof in his face and behaviour that whatever claim the vagabond woman might purpose to advance upon Richard, she had some base and justification to it which impeded Ethels husband to act with airy independence. Allan took note of it and his heart sickened with the fear of a last blot upon his sisters fate. For this reason he resolved to witness the communication between Richard Lansdale and Charlotte Larkes to the end.

When Allan had hurried her along some way and Richard was close behind them, though he followed hesitatingly at first, Diana suddenly shook off her conductors relaxing hand and faced round: „What a miserable, despicable creature you are" she cried, „how you cower before me though you defy me with my rights and my claims." She was fumbling in her dress the while, and suddenly something bright glittered on her finger. „Look, Mr. Graham," she said, holding it out to him in the light, „this ring is yonder gentlemans pledge to me that he intended to marry me, that he gave me his promise of marriage. I have done nothing to make him recall his vow, nor has he ever recalled it. He was not deceived in me when he gave it, he knew who I was when he still made it. I, a felons daughter had won that over him. I, his promised wife have a right to take him to account and to tell his present lady that she stands in my place."

"If you had had any right, a person of your description would doubtlessly have made it valid long ago," Richard smartly opposed her.

"A person of my description with a little goldring for a proof make a law-suit out against you, a breach-of-promise-of-marriage-case, eh? Taunt me, you scoffer. You never sent me a letter, Richard. You never granted me one slip of writing, you prudent, provident gentleman. But the ring is there. I have hungered and thirsted, and stolen and begged, but your ring I have kept. My proof, my right, my hold upon you, Mr. Lansdale."

"Your hold upon me? Didn't you say yourself just now that it was nothing of the kind? Don't get irrational in the same breath."

"Mr. Graham, is this ring nothing? Will it be nothing to Richards wife? His pledge of marriage to a vagrant, whom he loved for many, many months and only gave up for his family intervening?"

"Mrs. Lansdale will think that you have stolen the ring, and you know that nobody expects truth from the lips of a felons daughter" Richard interposed, his mouth quivering with cruel rage. "Mind that you are not the sort of person to trouble the hours of an honorable man. For pity on your apparent distress, which I am sorry to see, I'll give you all the money I have by me. It's money you want and I don't pinch money."

"Oh, how you speak to me, Richard! Do you remember how you once spoke to me? Your darling, your beautiful prize? Ha, ha! There's only one thing I am glad of: that I never loved you; that I fondled you, and wheedled you and coaxed you, you fool, to become the mistress of your possessions. That I have always despised you for a vain conceited, empty-hearted fob, for all his illustration and cultivation to be blind-folded and taken in by two or three clever words from me. Ridiculous and subser-

vient to me to the end if one of my own set had not brought about my fall. Ah, I reckoned upon my defeat all the time, but to whom have I ceded? I can't forgive you, I can't forgive my fate that — you have married a woman whose brother stood in the dock at the same time as my own father, my influence has not been overruled by wealth or station or honor, but by her! I hate you both for that."

How she goaded him, how she felt where she could sting his sensibilities!

"Is that prated about in your mouths already!" Richard cried with darkening brow. He thrust a ball of banknotes crumpled in his grip, into the girls hand. "There, and beware how you appear at the door of any abode which I frequent or inhabit. I promise you that you shall rue it." A promise that might be better kept than the former one of his love — ah Diana and Richard, how things change betwixt people like you!

Diana held the miserable donative in her hand, she smoothed the notes out between her fingers and said: "Six pounds. A fine gift for me. You owe me hundreds and thousands of pounds, Richard, you owe me half your fortune as true as I ought to have been your wife these many years. I should like to throw these notes in your face, sir! But you have brought me so low by your perfidy that I take any money. I accept them, more's the shame for you!"

Richard was moving away. "Come, Allan" he said, "by the testimony of her own lips you see what a low, common, contemptible creature she is, unworthy to cause us a moments care. She has given you opportunity to satisfy yourself that she can never aspire to cross the tender feelings of my wife."

But though the moment had arrived for Richard to make his exit from the painful interview, Allan was not

minded to obey his example. „I shall probably see this young girl home. It has grown late through this incident. You will know how to make your excuses at my mothers“ he concluded with a contemptuous smile.

„You know that Charlotte Larkes is an old acquaintance of mine and I shall offer her my renewed services, poor as they may be.“

The two parties seperated and Allan walked back townwards at the side of Diana.

„I was sorry at your disappearance, five years ago, when our help might yet have availed you, notwithstanding your fathers having brought new disaster upon himself,“ Allan began, addressing his companion.

„It was nothing that your help could give me I pursued at the time. You know now what it was. I had hopes that were not idle and unfounded then, to become the wife of Richard Lansdale. I had worked so well upon his folly —“ oh the disdain of the vagrant for the exquisite in the choice of each word — „that he would have made all fast just as possibly as he undid all with one stroke. My beauty might have done it or my appeals might have done it. Look, I had led a life of misery from my childhood upwards, always dreaming, always fancying that I was bright enough and winning enough to drag myself out of my horrible fate as those around me could not. They always used me with regard to my being pretty, to touch the heart of alms-givers or to charm the public in the plays. So I came to set some store by my prettiness. When father was taken away, my mother earned her bread with being something I never remembered at a minor theatre in London. I was brought on the stage there. From my mother I have got some rudiments of education. She died when I was nine years old. Strangers then took me up and handled me about. I was knocked through life, always wanting to live and doing

what I must for it. I got into shabby company, into glittering company that was worse, and at last into company that lives like the beasts. I am quite down now and can't sink any lower but the little depth into the grave. Ha, ha, is that pathetic? I am not going to die yet. Richard inclined to treat me according to my dress, that is like a beggar, just now. Yet he knows well enough that there would have been but a step from the beggar to Mrs. Lansdale. I should not have made such a bad wife for him, I am sure. I am clever or should not have brought him so far. I had tried my beauty upon him and it was worth something as I always believed. I was not seventeen when he saw me first, young enough to be formed yet. All this I tell you here, I have told him. Of course I had set to gain him with deception, but he found me out and I melted his reproaches with my forlornness, with the description of my position. He took me out of the place where we met hitherto that same day, and put me into cleaner lodgings telling the landlady I was a young ward of his. He had a light unaffected way to make matters smooth for himself and an instinct he was much too conceitless for its having been prudent design — an instinct to cut off all consequences by which he might be got hold of afterwards. I saw it all along but I could make no remonstrances, I had to lead him on cautiously. He paid a weeks lodging in advance. He wanted to arrange some matters and come to me at the end of the term to tell me of the preparations for our clandestine marriage. That was the most excited, impatient, expectant week of my life. He did not come one day and he did not come another. A boy, whom Richard had picked up in the street near the house, to be his messenger, came when the week was full and brought me a cover of a letter with no writing in it, only a few notes — notes like to-day. That was what Richard meant

as my dismission. The simple-minded creature even believed that I was ignorant of his real name and state and that dealing with me was over-easy. I showed him at least that this was not the case, and he betrayed how he feared my power yet in the way he eluded my indignant persecution. But I convinced myself that there was no bringing him back. He had got warning from a quarter that was stronger than I. Why enrage myself about it? I knew it was a desperate game, that my chances hung by thin threads. Yet I had hoped to win, good God, I had hoped to win. What I had waited for since an age when common girls do not yet think of weighing the value of their attractions, had come with him, really, actually, and I could not grasp it. In so many words I have asked him to save me. There are girls who never felt the misery in which they live, who never approached the plan of extricating themselves from the abject lot they were born to. I was not born to it, probably through cause of that I never took kindly to it and understood all its abominable blemishes better than those who take its execrable features for granted. Well, I am getting into that state myself now, notwithstanding" she said with a ghastly laugh.

"No, no" said Allan impulsively, „there must be found help for you. You must be rescued from this vile fate by truer means than the charms of beauty. Do you remember that at the time you withdrew from us you had another chance than Richard Lansdale to enter into an honest, a better career? Did you not earn something with your handiwork, were you not commended as skilful and deft by several houses that employed you? Have you given up all those fairer opportunities in the fatal chase of a promise more vain?"

„I set all on the stake, all, my whole soul and life, because I knew that it was a grand, unparalleled chance.

I had resolved to say and do everything necessary to secure it, and be it a perjury and be it every conceivable trespass. My sewing was only a device. When my father took me here from London and I was new in Liverpool, fresh in reputation I mean, I made desperate exertions to procure some honest source of earning, not for a violent fancy to such a sort of industry, for I was never used to it, but because I was then on the track of Richard and I wanted neither to be disturbed by the consequences of misdeeds of mine nor to be without means as to deluding him about my character. My good resources of invention made me succeed to a degree and luckily, very luckily, my father earned his bread honestly at the time. I thank you for it even yet, Mr. Graham. I got a little needle-work here and there, scraped it out with the most pitiable pains, sir, and sometimes, when you or your friends came of an evening, I took out a particular piece of sewing I kept for the purpose, to show you my diligence and you men never detected what a ludicrous piece of work I fashioned, being obliged to stitch away somehow before your eyes. It was laughable;" her eyes lighted up with the sad sense of humor that will run yet through vice and destitution and disgrace. „There's some discreet handwork to be done too sometimes for our own people — and paid. Somehow you know. I should never have made my living with the work I got at the time and I hate a life of sewing, of nothing but sewing."

„How have you lived since you gave up the hopes for your marriage?"

„I wasted my time and spent all the money he left me, seeking for Richard, for a reunion with him. Then I reverted to my father. He was under trial then, as you will remember, but I knew that he must dispose yet of all that large sum he well, you know. He had said that others of the gang had stolen the money from him, but that was

not true of course. I wanted to see father that he might give me a sign where to find the property. He did as I expected, half of his catch was for me. His own half would remain lost. I acted upon his instructions, but others were just as clever as we. They knew among us what good spoil my father had made and how he would leave it well-hidden behind and how he would give part of it to me. I was closely, invisibly watched, I did all I could for precaution, but when I went to — the place — and took out the money somebody gave me a terrible blow on the head and struck me down senseless."

She stood still for a moment and turned her face up to her companion, pointing to a discolored scar which marked the side of her face from near the temple up to her brow and down to her check, not to the advantage of her altogether faded looks.

"That's the seam of it" she said. "I was taken to the hospital for several months. My money was gone. Then I was brought up before police-courts and put into jail for another couple of months. I was very sickly after that wound, it has shaken me. I have not yet got over it, I have never been after it what I was before. It has sunk me into my destiny and has done for me finally to be as poor of spirit as the rest."

Diana had taken the lead in their walk while telling her story, and sometimes Allan had already cast a reflective look around, wondering at the lanes and alleys so much worse than the worst he knew, anxious not to lose his track back through their labyrinth. A rare part of the noble commercial city it was, where poverty burned its dim lamp, as late into the night as splendor and extravagance does, where squalor drove its reeking streams along the side of the footpath, where ruin threatened to destroy itself and everything else near it. A spectacle that might strike flame in the breast of a wanderer from without,

but must muffle and choke, main and soil those who herd within its compass. To breathe this filthy atmosphere and think that custom, the great conceiler, had deprived its inhabitants of the consciousness of its detestableness. To see this wrangling with death and want and think how all the higher prizes of humanity are expelled from such regions. What simple, primitive exhortations must be preached to this last end of the great human body, whose head looks into the clouds and dallies with spiritual problems. When will these lowest members be brought up to the point of the advanced head or when will humanity be mindful of all its parts as man is solicitous for all the members of his frame, particularly for any one discomposed and ailing?

"You said you were going to see me home" said Diana, pausing abruptly before a low door, as she ended her narrative. "Will you give me a shilling too, Mr. Graham, it shall be welcome besides these notes, more so as you are so friendly, sir. To you it's good-bye after you have seen me in."

"I would not give you money though I had as much or more as Mr. Lansdale has. But I do not wish to see the last of you now but to help you if I only were sure how."

"Thank you" she broke in shortly, pushing open the door and stepping into the interior, "I am very sure that you can't help me."

Allan did not attend to her reply, for his entire senses were riveted upon the details of the apartment which his young companion designated as her home, her nightly lodging. The odor pregnant of taint and disease, that rolled towards his nostrils from the dingy room, the damp of the walls and floor, that clave his foot to the ground, were nothing, they were forgotten by the impressions of sight. To the right from the door, not even laid straight

but thrown across so as to limit off the farther corner of the apartment, lay a body — a dead body belonging to a ragged and wasted woman. It naturally attracted the first look of a person penetrating into that dwelling-hole, although a man in an uncouth state of drunkenness was raising a boisterous clamor on the opposite side. An old woman was occupied in winning him over to some proposition of hers. A younger person of the male sex was leaning against the wall between the dead being and the intoxicated being, stoically smoking a brown clay-pipe. A small infant lay on its back crying out apparently all the life it had in its diminutive body, and two or three other children, none of them beyond the tenderest years, crawled about unto his feet and up to the inert arms of the deceased woman.

„She has died during my absence, from the fever" said Diana, looking down at the figure, which Allan shrank from resting his eyes upon because of the imperfect covering that was left upon the body destined for the tomb.

„Good God!" was the cry wrung from Allans heart, as a tiny hand touched his boot; „how can any one give children to such a life as this!"

„Children are everywhere," observed Diana, stepping lightly over the crying infant and standing at the head of the corpse. Allans look then fastened on her. She had a striking appearance of youth at that moment, slim and agile of figure and something, an indefinable something fresh in her worn face engendered perhaps by the contrast with the finished and stamped perdition by her side. There was some vestige of higher humanity, of moral conception in Dianas face, which the dead face lacked and left it void of the tragic eloquence of death.

„You cannot mean to pass the night here" Allan addressed her.

„Certainly I intend to. Do you mean because of the dead body?” with a scornful side-glance at it.

„No, it is not the worst here. But in this small room you cannot crowd all of you together, and it looks as if every one of those proposed to make his home here” he said, passing his look round the drunken man, the smoking man, the scolding woman and the wailing children.

„Of course they do, and I shall. If such a fortune as ought to be mine had been divided into five parts instead of being owned by one man like Mr. Lansdale those people needn’t heap themselves together in one room, and we all might lead purer lives. As it is ,tis a fine lodging for two shillings a week.”

The whole moral conviction of the man rose up intense and repudiative to repel the brazen words of the unhappy girl reared up into this abasement, this resignation of wishes even.

„You cannot remain here” Allan repeated, with the persuasion that what was unacceptable to his delicate sensibility must be made to become an impossibility altogether. „You cannot take your rest among this sort of strangers, for all that you may be forsaken and poor. You must come away with me, you forlorn girl.”

„No” replied Diana obstinately, „many and many a night have I taken my sleep here and so shall I do for the future.”

„Charlotte Larkes, you have money to provide better quarters to-night — —”

She swiftly stepped backwards to him and frowning in his face held up her finger while she whispered: „Never mention money here. I won’t spend it for this purpose, that’s all. Good-night, Mr. Graham” she added in an audible voice.

But Allan had taken hold of her to drag her out of her self-willed wretchedness as a better genius seizes the prey

of hell with a holy imperative force. The obscene language of the tipsy ruffian lashed him on to a dictatorial urgency when the convicts daughter, slipping from his grasp, exclaimed:

"Jack, here's a gent who won't allow me to remain in this house in peace. Tell him to let me alone if you can do so without being brutal."

The man smoking the clay-pipe wheeled round and ere Allan was in the midst of considering how to be on his defensive against any violence, he stood on the pavement before the threshold of the abode and the door was clapped to in his face. A horselaugh provingen from the triumphant Jack sounded within.

"Don't laugh. Hold your tongue" cried the voice of Diana.

This admonition was not obeyed however, whereupon Dianas objection was raised to its highest pitch and something like a scuffle ensued from the diversity of tastes. Some very ugly words were used, but none of them was pronounced in the voice of Diana. After a few minutes the uproar calmed and Allan began to seek his way back, unwillingly resigned to a defeat of his honest purpose, and regain the outlet of this nasty, noxious sphere.

Chapter VI.

Mrs. Rutherbys Communication.

Uncle Arthur had already retired to bed an hour ago when Allan arrived home. Martha still kept a light down-stairs and drew up her eyebrows at the entrance of her belated favorite. She observed the distraught manner of the young man and doubted not that some particular reason had detained him so long out of doors. She sympathized

with his unsolved preoccupation and offered to make him comfortable with tea and a bustling officiousness about his person. But Allan checking her kindly, hurried up to his own room. He threw himself upon his bed, but not to sleep — only to think over wearily and tenaciously, the adventure of that night. He constantly felt how he had left the young girl he had known since an earlier age, behind in yonder sink of perdition, of mental and bodily proscription. If after the frustration of her vain girlish hopes she was at last, as she called it, taking kindly to the life he saw in her present home, the child of Thomas Larkes was descending, doomed and irretrievable, to the brute state of humanity. Oh that Richard Lansdale had but married her! Though Charlotte had made him but a prodigal, frivolous, flaunting wife, she wotild thereby have been saved from a contamination and perversion which she was too fair as yet to be abandoned to. The bright intelligence that had conceived the scheme of saving itself from perdition might have handed her on to purer, more inspiring influences, as it now would be deadened, routed and vulgarized. She could not be left as he was obliged to leave her that evening, she must be rescued.

Must she? — and all the little children crawling about there in filth and sloth, learning the words which the man and the woman spoke, with their lisping tongues, and Jack smoking his pipe beside the corpse, having crept up to such corpses perhaps when he was small like the younger hopeful generation? Save them all or not? Impossible. Then why should Diana not be lost like the rest of them? Who likes to admit that any human creature should be thrown aside as doomed by a missionary of Christ, yet let us see what Allan and his clerical friends, the Rev. Arthur Clare and the Rev. Sidney Adams can do for that one room in that rotten row in the town of Liverpool. Snatch the infants from their parents, fetter the parents to

some efficient reformatory? Little store as Allan Graham had ever put by the worth of money I catch him thinking, under the impression of the humiliating scene he had witnessed, better that all lords and princes, millionaires and bondholders in Great Britain and Ireland should take their wives from the ragged sluts of Dianas class than leave them where they were. Would that be corrupting higher society? Little firmly would its grand advantages be rooted, if that could be and enough of finer imperfection need not shrink so prudishly from contact with the coarser one.

Ethel, Ethel, less happy will you be for standing in the place that was promised to the roving beauty of the street. Richard Lansdale, never utter one of your philanthropic speeches in my presence any more. Come with me to Dianas home and do not recoil but reflect.

Allans thoughts however, for all that their mournfulness was inaugurated by indignation at his brother-in-law and regret for his sister, who had taken a very common character for an excellent one and must become aware of her mistake sooner or later, dwelt with somberest persistence on the fate of Richards play-thing and his own former protegee. He was up betimes next morning eager to talk the affair over with his uncle at the breakfast-table. They discussed it exhaustively, those two, the ardent younger man and the conscientious elder one. They referred to reformatories and benevolent institutions, for the character of the two Larkes as proved hitherto rather put a trial with private charity out of the question. Both gentlemen however were decided to pursue this renewed connexion with the ways of Charlotte for her welfare if might be. As soon as Allans time was his own at the end of the day he set out on the persecution of their joint plans, returning to the spot where he had left the girl on the night before. He had a sensation as if every night she

was allowed in this sleeping-room were to be marked with a thick black line in the calendar of the girl and of himself if he could not prevent it.

He found the little door he sought, which was not much easier than discovering again the enchanted opening in the fairy-tale, and knocked. He ought to be heard instantly if anybody were within, and so he was. Something tumbling, something shuffling and yesterdays scene with a few variations was before him again. The dead body was still there, the children were disposed in different attitudes, one of them, the eldest, lay upon the rotten straw thinly strewn in a corner. The old woman was the person who gave him admittance, the rest of the adults were not here. The former had probably descended from the couch which upheld the noble institution of a bed in this haunt of deprivation. This living mummy of a wicked old harridan grinned inquiringly into Allans face until he made known his desire of seeing Charlotte Larkes.

„Charlotte Larkes, sir? She's not here, sir, as you can see. Poor deary, I am sorry that you miss her."

„But she will return, I suppose?"

„Oh yes, she will return, I suppose."

„Later on, this evening?"

„We'll see, sir, we'll see."

„Now won't you tell me, old woman, when it is probable that I may find the young girl I came for, seeing that I wish to speak to her?"

„Wish, wish! He, he. She's told us. yesterday night, that you are not flush of pence, good gentleman, and so I don't see why we should fulfil your wishes. She's away and perhaps she'll come in later on, as this is her house. Perhaps she won't."

Allan did not gratify the leering insinuations of the ancient beggar, but stepped out into the street resolved to

linger about in the vicinity for an opportunity to meet Charlotte bound for her nightly shelter.

It may be said that the wellmeaning young man exposed himself to some danger perambulating the black-guardly alleys harboring no good intent for sure towards any stranger not marked with Cains stamp of peacelessness. Nor was it anything less of a sacrifice to tarry voluntarily in the feverbreathing air, up this row and down that by-lane, watching for the approach of the girl. After two hours might have passed by to the tired watcher, at last he thought he would walk up to the door again, as Charlotte might have slipped in unperceived during one of the turns he took. The door was ajar, seemingly as he himself had left it when he went out before. He looked mutely in without ceremony and met the piercing glass-eyes of the mummy half recumbent on the couch. She chuckled as he as silently drew back his head and screeched:

„Not yet come in, sir, not yet come in.”

Allans ethic powers were worthy of respect, keeping him as they were regardless of every outrage upon the senses, patiently waiting yet for the sake of a soul thrown in his way with an unintentional appeal to his fine feeling humanity.

It had grown extremely late when he returned for the third time to ask for Charlotte at the house, persuaded that it was not an hour to quest for the young girl any more if she had not yet made her entrance. Still the old woman was on the bed, sitting this time, and in a much improved mood for reason of active stimulants no doubt, and the children were awake. Allan addressed her this time: „Charlotte Larkes has not make her appearance,” he said.

„No, not yet.”

„She will not come at all to-night, I suppose.”

„No, it looks as if she'll stay the night out. She'll stay out. —”

„Where!" asked Allan quickly, seeing that the old creature was so cunning as to govern her liquor-incited tongue, all the more toughly for that it wanted to be going.

„In the streets, somewhere," was the laconical reply.

Then, hitting with flashing wit the possibility of babbling without threatening to involve harm upon herself and endangering her discretion she added, fixing her derisive eyes upon her interlocutor: „Aye, aye, you're mighty interested about my precious pet. Seeking her for four hours together. Perhaps you're going to marry her, like that noble swain she had. Is she pretty still? But she won't; she won't take you. She wouldn't accept you, he, he You've not got his money and fortune. Nor his good looks, he, he. You're no spoil at all, sir. He was. Deary, deary me, if she had caught him." Shaking her head musingly a great many times, then, as if the idea fired her drugged brain, she slipped her feet on to the floor and continued as she sat on the edge of the bed, beating her own body or the bit of counterpane in her excitement: „It would have been a good joke if she had caught him. But he would never have married her. I have spoiled nothing with my anger. Always look to prudence first ere you let loose your anger. I did, although my anger was awful, sir, awful. She's a bad lot, Charly is. Always was. I've reared her and fed her, I've been her second mother to her since she was a bit of a girl, a real dot of a girl. I've made her. And she's so ungrateful, for all I have done for her. Didn't I teach her to live, pretty, precocious thing? She writes a neat hand, sir, I told her to cultivate that hand. She has a better way of speaking than most of us has — I told her not to forget that. She's ingenious and I told her how to use that I was only a poor old beggar-woman in London, but I took her up when her mother died, because my heart ached for her, poor desolate thing Her mother was a cheat of cheats. Did Charly

love her? No, she didn't, but she said so sometimes, and when she said so she was eloquent, sir, eloquent. Ah, how she could act! She was out on private business in London sometimes which no one knew what it was. She could do the lady in nice clothes, deary, deary. Then came her daddy and then he wanted to move over to Liverpool. But I wouldn't stay behind, because I had nursed her and tended her and my heart had become wrapt up in her like, my precious pretty." — Who's that acting now, I wonder? —

"Then I saw her take up with her swain and I helped her, for there's not a good-fortune I would have demurred to help my lovey to. I allowed them to meet in my little room and I allowed her to puff herself up as a nice young lady to whom I was an object of charity. I let it all pass because her good depended on it. But not for that did I mean her to be overbearing, and ungrateful and unmindful. I witnessed all their love-making, and their exchange of locks, and how he gave her an engagement-ring — he did, sir, she did get a ring from him, I saw her slip it into her dress and never show it afterwards, the sly cat — she's pawned it soon I have no doubt, as soon as it's got useless. O what a game she played! But her ambition was too high — her ambition was too high. He'd almost have married her, but it's always almost. He detected her. And yet she was not beaten! Bless my soul, she still held him to his word. I listened with all ears open and I admired her, I really admired her. I adored her. And for all that she then repaid me basely. She went out with him in the evening and never returned home. I wait and wait and she gives no sign. I see that she means to give me the slip. Me her mother, who has given her of her scanty crust and covered her and protected her and done all for her. I get me up and look after her. I look for her swain, he was a fine young man,

as introduced himself by the name of Richard Martin, but Charly dear set me to find out who he really was and he was a Mr. Lansdale, a young man of Rosen & Co., or George Rosen or something here in this town. I don't remember things, my head's dizzy at times of late. I look for her swain but there's no sign of him. By a pure accident pervading whole Liverpool, I come upon the deceitful hussy and reprove her all her heartlessness and desertion and ungratefulness. But she laughs in my face and casts me out of doors. Very well, says I, you shan't ha' done that for nothing. Is your play quite played out? No is isn't. Then you had better made no enemies yet of old friends. I make a calculation how things stand. If she becomes his lady it might serve some purpose for all her riding the high horse towards me. But he would never marry her, after knowing, you know. That was all fine talk and nothing more. Then I would rather take my pleasure and assert myself, take my revenge, sir, aye, aye. She was an artful hussy, but she never ought to have set her expectation too high and think of marriage. She ought only to have drawn money from him. She could have drawn more, if she hadn't proposed to herself to lure him on to the great step. I disapproved of it all the time and you see how she's lost everything and remained bare and cheated. But she had such an opinion of herself and thought her puny good looks were worth a kingdom. I managed wiser in my little way. That Mr. Martin was rather a lavish gentleman, quite a magnificent man and many's the bounteous gift I got from him, God bless him. I had money from him then, enough to make a little journey, so off I set from Charlys door to Coketown, that's were Mr. Martins, Mr. Lansdales family was, and bargain my tale there. I seek out the Lansdale mansion; I says I've some particular business to communicate and it's worth their while to listen to me. I am

admitted to Mr. Lansdales aunt, dear, what a grand, proud lady she was, and I chuckle to tell her her nevvy is on the point of marrying the convicts daughter, Diana Larkes. Her name is Diana Larkes, for I only changed it into Charlotte because it was more convenient and she changed it back' cause she believed it more elegant like for her gentle swain. She's Charlotte Cooper in my house. She was Diana Rowe for him, she wouldn't say Larkes you know, he, he. And she'd have been nearer the truth on the marriage license, he! How I shake that haughty lady, Mr. Lansdales aunt, how she wanted to be supercilious at first and hear not a word, and how I make her listen, money first, money first, he, he, he. And then how she won't believe it, not she, and I says tranquilly: „Ask your nevvy if its true, please, and give me t'other half of my fee arterwards. Or if it's not true you won't mind my making a joke of it says I. And down came my fine, proud lady, getting fidgety like and having all sorts of fears and so concerned about that little bit of scandal as them fine ladies are. It was a triumph, over that piece of pride and over Charly, but I don't know if I'd ha' done it again in a tranquiller state of mind. Aye, aye, I'm old and muddled, getting more old and muddled and I've let my wrath run away with me, I have. I have told Charly what I had done, why did I tell her, to make her vindictive — why — —” Mrs. Rutherby had chattered and mumbled enough at last, and having come round again to that consideration which began in excitement and ended in an outburst of repining, gnawing at her heart, at having perhaps allowed passion to get the better of money, she suddenly cast a look into the hidden recesses of ther couch and said to her guest, pointing sharply to the door: „Now go, sir, will you? It's late sir.”

Allan having listened to the old dames impromptu, interposing few proper remarks, leisurely obeyed his enter-

tainers injunction. He tarried a moment with a look on the heap of straw, where the eldest of the children lay stretched in apparently uneasy repose.

"This child is ill, it seems" he said, regarding it pensively.

"Yes, caught the fever from my granddaughter," sounded the reply in the dry voice of the hag, pointing to the body for superadded illustration.

"It is her mother she has lost?"

"Her stepmother. She'll have another stepmother soon enough. Will you go, sir?" entreated the lady of the house, anxious to be alone with her bottle.

Here then was the whole story of Miss Larkes' education. Here was her history, void of love, of the awakening of moral sense. That shrivelled finger pointing to the dead body of Mrs. Rutherford's grandchild, was it not cold and inanimate as the tombstone on which you may put any epitaph you please, be it deepest earnestness or most indifferent irony? As those babies fretfully nursed by the hag, thus had the girl Charlotte or Diana been nourished and taught to become an actor on the stage of sin. This horrible insensibility, this cold-blooded bargaining in Charlottes surroundings was what touched Allan to the quick as he passed review of what had occurred that evening.

Of course Diana was artful and cunning, of course one could give her but scarce confidence. It is very clear how deep she is in deceit and dissimulation from the way in which she cajoled her promising lover Richard Lansdale. How she met him by the merest chance, bent on some other trick, how first she only speculated on purses in that railway-carriage and then by and by the glowing hope sprung up within her that she could possibly make an impression upon him, interest him. How she found that she had interested him, and being dishonest by profession was naturally bent in the first instance upon proving her probity. She parted with the well-earned five-pound

note, like a wise creature as she was, to deserve a higher gain. She made an entrance into a strange house, to delude her pursuer as to her real wherabouts. For did she not make a pretext of seeking the owners of a particularly elegant little dog, who foolish as such dogs are, had easily strayed from his masters by the most absolute casualty, and taken kindly to new masters — bringing him to the Colstons, who could never bear the sight of a dog? She knew about the house from a former servant, and she hit upon the house because the family was always out and good Janet Hobbs was no tell-tale. I see it before me how Diana desisted from arriving at an understanding with Janet and managed to penetrate into the parlor and huddled off her bonnet and looked out of the window upon her gentle swain. Perhaps Richard was yet in London when Dianas darling little dog was handed back to its original owners for a reward. — Poor little heart how it beat, when she was to go to Liverpool with her pa. And she met her lover again and she read his character better than Ethel Graham, the uncivilized vagrant, and she said all that was required for her part and at last the footlights went out and everyone sought the chilly street, where there were carriages for the rich ones and bare feet for the poor ones.

The daughter of Thomas Larkes was not to be trusted, not to be recommended, not to be hoped for but to be profoundly and regrettfully pitied. And so did Allan pity her for her wasted youth and the stolen chances of her feminine heart. And as he fell asleep that night, he felt again as if some additional harm were done to Diana for being left another twenty-four-hours among her vile associations. On the next afternoon he made another attempt to have a conference with Diana, which was this time crowned with success. The man who was drunken on the first evening, was in the lodging, Diana and her dear adopted

mother or guardian were present, and still the mute, late tenant was lying on the floor. It did not make the air perceptibly more impure. Allan at once directed his words to the girl, but Mrs. Rutherby already relied on the intimate friendship they had formed with a slight inquisitive suspicion perhaps that the young man was yet another ensnared in clever Charlys declining spells.

„Please come out with me, I wish to speak to you” Allan said however, detaining himself only for a moment to inquire after the progress of the infant patient upon the straw.

„She's worse, sir, she's worse” said Mrs. Rutherby, having reassumed a beggarly whine with re-established sobriety.

„She'll die” said Diana, „soon enough perhaps to bury her along with Eliza. All the better if she does.”

She spoke it coldly and unfeelingly with that true, judicious sentence at the end.

Diana followed Allans bidding without hesitation and without apparent curiosity or concern. They wandered slowly through the streets, Allan taking the direction out of those foul, dreadful passages, towards the parts inhabited by his uncle and his friends. He planned, in case of his influence prevailing with the girl, to bring her into Marthas room for that night and seek for himself a bed at Mauds or Mr. Moffats. Diana attended him with apathic silence while he considered about the most impressive summons to begin with in his charitable office.

„Charlotte Larkes,” Allan said, „I have come to tell you that you must leave your present life. I have met you, the other night, I believe, that you should be taken out of it, as I already once have hoped to help you.”

„How shall I be made to leave my present life?” she responded slowly, being no doubt prepared for his ex-postulations since she became aware that her former patron had taken up the track he found of her.

„You must accept some means of subsistence we will provide for you and turn your back upon those degrading haunts which you yourself have said that you desired to escape."

Yes, she had declared that the chief incitement to and motive of her designs upon Richard Lansdales affection had been to rescue herself from the misery which her breeding had condemned her to. With that desperate desire for emancipation from the toils of her fate, that had pointed and sharpened her mental resources then, she ought now to seize the last chance extended to her again by the grace of the Father of us all. The struggling nature of good should avail itself of the proffer of salvation upon any terms.

But Diana was not eager to enter into her rescuers propositions. There came out the difference that exists between a mind opened to the abhorrence of evil or to the love of good.

„Don't," said Allans companion, as he unfolded the plans made in council with his uncle. A flash of wildness came into her eye: „I won't be taken up by charity. I have a right to have been in better circumstances, a right, sir, and for that I despise charity, I despise those who do it, who would pity me, and be gracious to me and condescending to me. If Mr. Lansdale had been untrue to one of the brilliant ladies of his society, sir, would he not have been reproached, should he not have been made responsible for his word? He has cast me off as I could cast off the rags I wear, but I have the same right upon him, as that grand lady would have had. I have."

„No honorable man will contradict that Richard Lansdale has done you a shameful injustice. But that satisfaction is now of little moment, for it is not possible to make it assist you substantially, my poor girl. For that you must look to other chances, which if humbler, may yet be much preferable to the expedient you had traced

out for yourself. My uncle could recommend you to a refuge for homeless or unhappy women for instance, from which many a girl has gone out into a very bright, contenting life."

"You mean asylums and reformatories? Ha, ha, they're nothing new to me. I was put into one after coming from prison. After three months I ran away. They said it was a shame, I suppose. And so it was regarding the feeding and the clothing and the housing, they gave me. But I was too proud for it, I couldn't bear it. Treat me like a naughty child, have myself watched over, and conducted tenderly by kind, pure souls. I don't want to look up to those virtuous people, who never have known what I have known and grown up suffering what I have suffered. They're no better than myself and catch me at yielding deference to them for believing it otherwise. I won't stand being looked down upon, I with my right betrayed of being Mrs. Lansdale. Then I might have changed, then I might have seen other things as I had dreamed. But charity, we're just as good as charity-givers ourselves, leave it to fools who think they're not."

"And are blessed by the Lord. Oh Charlotte Larkes, that is a fatal spirit within you. But I won't offer you assistance for charity, let it be for friendship. We will get you employment again, you may set up quite independently and live by the work of your hand. Or you may enter some decent family if you will give us a sincere promise of wanting to alter your courses."

"There's not a decent person but will think itself a great deal higher than myself and stoop to me at the best. I hate all your society, sir. Don't tempt me, when they provoke my feelings I'll cheat them. I am quite frank with you, Mr. Graham. There's more spirit in me for being despised than you wot of. I don't admit superiors although I am so low, put my life, my fate, my

complaints and grievances upon the highest of our superiors, and see. My inferiors they may turn out to be."

"There is but one superiority and inferiority, young girl, and that is marked by good deeds and good will. That is the only one which my uncle and I and other friends of ours regard. Your mind is imbibited by the wrong done you by a thoughtless lover, but such is suffered by a thousand persons of high and low degree —"

"But it is not always of such vast consequence — —"

"The consequence it is allowed to have rests solely with yourself. If you have a sense of the wretchedness of your existence and will be saved, come and accept some honest work. It may please you best to set up by yourself and be supplied with plain sewing by some people who mean to be your friends."

"No, I won't," said Diana, doggedly.

Allans patience was near failing him and yet his compassion was stronger. "Then there is nothing in your professions of abhorrence for your misery?" he said severely. "It was the sordid greed of lucre, the lowest scheming for a wonderful opportunity of good-fortune that fastened you upon Richard Lansdale? There was no spark of any moral justification in it? Then you have scarcely a right for such indignation at being as basely repaid as you basely intrigued. You are too lazy to work, too indolent to win a better station than the beasts"

"I am not too lazy, I am not indolent. You do not conceive how hard my life is, it seems. But I have told you I don't like a life of sewing, sewing, sewing. I have seen girls who lead it and have thought I shouldn't possess the endurance for it. I fancy to myself how that might be all honesty would give me, with the needle in hand and the stuff before me, working, working, to put the well-paid bread into my mouth, twice, thrice a day, growing old, always the same, dying, always the same.

Would you like it, I mean would your sisters like it, Mrs. Lansdale like it, your mother like it?"

"I don't say that it is all pleasantness. But many people do not have their taste, who defer to necessity. I myself do not think of following my pleasure, but my duty. It is for the salvation from deeper, much deeper calamities, that you ought to put up with greater discomforts than these. And perhaps by-and-by other ways and means will appear and you may leave that monotony of needlework for some very bright fate which you can never reach as you are now."

"Perhaps, and perhaps not. Perhaps it will last, this drudgery and I shall be tired and return to my old haunts. Then it would be worse as when I had never abandoned them."

"Charlotte, Charlotte and your horror of your present life!"

"I'm getting over it. If you had come after I had slept in that sort of rooms you have seen, twice or thrice, or before I had stept into them at all, my loathing for those pig-sties might have frightened me into acceptance of any propositions. But now my garments are soiled, and my breath is sullied by them and I have conformed to them for more than two years and a dulness is creeping into my brain. I see that I may even live so. My prettiness is wasted in prisons and musty lodgings, I have long resigned my hopes of deliverance from this distress and am indifferent now. If there's a chance of honesty that I'd take a fancy to I'll use it, but I will have my choice. Richard tries to have everything to his taste. The more money people have and the greater they are in the world the more do they regard their taste. I can do what Richard does. Its odious to my taste to be a seamstress, so I won't be it. That's my will. Give me a shilling, Mr. Graham, for I am going back now. Or are you very poor yourself, then I won't trouble you."

She was going back! Allans desponding tiredness rallied at the words. Going back to that foul den from which he had trusted to withdraw her!

„No, no, you shall not go back,” he said.

„Can you hinder me?” she cried defiantly. „I can take my choice, as any noble, proud, haughty gentleman can and against your exactions and bidding. I am a fullgrown woman, you have no right over me.”

„I have no power over you. Right I have, yes, the right of calling evil back to good. Is it possible for you to understand that right, misguided girl, to understand how it is a fellow-creatures duty to hold you back from the corruption, the seduction, the vice there behind you? How I can not submit to seeing you cast yourself away but must sunder you from that perdition, that villainousness against your perverted will?”

„By force?” she asked with dreadful, triumphant mockery and walked swiftly away back, retreating into the sombre shadows of her doomed homestead.

„Think it over yet, think it over yet,” Allan called out after her.

So he was obliged to leave her to her doom, to let her be lost if she would. Back she was going into the sickening air, into the scenes bearing infection from fever and sin. The high ideal of him, the disciple of a true Christian minister, lay shipwrecked in his heart that night. He had met the strength of evil in both father and daughter and they had beaten his ardent youthful confidence into flight.

Chapter VII.**Bound for Australia.**

There actually was a ray of sun upon the threshold of Mr. Kenyons gloomy little shop. The sun having descended a stage westwards from a clear mid-day very fine for the time of the year, peered into all the tenements on the left side of the street. Allan was looking out at the golden streak which lent a rare gayety in that out-of-the-sun region, when suddenly a figure meddled with it and for a moment took the beam all to itself. It was a man shining in a bran-new tobacco-brown suit, likewise in a resplendant white hat and very inexperienced boots. A portly gentleman, if he will claim the appellation, be it in honor to his magnificent pair of chestnut whiskers.

„How do you do,” said the Whiskers; then observing that the druggist assistant demurred rather in his response to this greeting, they added: „I hope you know your father, Allan?”

Of course Allan did, only as Mr. Robert Graham had never yet been seen in Liverpool, some consternation at his sudden appearance might be excusable.

„I’ve arrived yesterday evening” Mr. Graham proceeded, after Allans having discharged his duty as a son. „I’m going to Australia, my boy.”

„Yes,” he went on, „you may well look surprised, because no doubt you thought me glued to London and the Courts of Equity. It’s now seven months since I didn’t put my foot into any of the courts. I’ve thrown the business up. They’re telling great things of Australia and I’ve made up my mind that it’s the best thing a man can do and worth a fine inheritance and estate, to go to the colonies. So I just packed up and came down here, to take

passage you know. I've asked your mother to go with me. She declines, flatly. So I'll take passage in a steamer that sails this week, instead of going next month. I told her to consider, to take time, but she wouldn't hear of it. Doesn't want to leave her family and is used to the place and all that. She's right in some way, as a lady and a mother. Going out in this manner is roughing it, you know. But it's another thing to ask you to go with me, my son. As one can't expect to find you at your mothers I've looked you up this morning to settle the question quickly if you'd like to go abroad."

„I go abroad!"

„Yes, Allan, you needn't be so startled. Doesn't it occur to you at once that it would be the best thing for you to do? We're not bound for the diggings of course. That was folly at the best time. But many a man who never lifts his head at home lifts it high there. The climate is good, I understand, and no ferocious beasts, only vermin. There's room, there are chances which one never falls in with in the old hum-drum at home." Mr. Graham, leaning his arm on the counter rested his eyes for some minutes upon the interior of the shop in silent abstraction. He then remarked: „Allan, this shop is very damp it seems. Bad for the health."

„It is a little damp I believe. But I have observed nothing amiss with my health, father."

„You don't look over-lively, and that's true."

„That's not the dampness of the shop I suppose. There are heavy things weighing on me that may be a better reason for my looking worn."

„Ah, there you have it. You've got yourself into an abominable position and I say England will never forgive nor forget it. England will not forgive it you. There's a blot upon your history, there's a stand-still in your fortunes which you'll never get over. Miserable as I have seen

you in London two years ago I say to myself: ,One who has once looked like that seldom looks much the contrary again in his own country.' But in a new country one is new. Australia is the land for people with weak points in their history, be it a humiliation which shall be ignored or too great a splendor which one hushes up the contrast from. I'd like to have you with me, for you are a young, active man, a steady man who carves his way where it is to be carved. You're a log upon your family here, I as your father will be frank with you, that's what you are and you have not your mothers reason to hang back —"

„My family is very loving with me, father, and would be as sorry to see me go, I do believe, as I would be to leave them."

„Oh ay, they 're very tender I have no doubt, but this isn't the principal question either. It's your future, my boy. I am quite disinterested and only give you my best counsel according to my opinions, as a father. It's my counsel, decidedly, to go to Australia."

„My future is already assured here, father. Mamma has informed you in her letters of the arrangement Mr. Kenyon has been pleased to make, which amounts to a provision for life for me."

„But what sort of a provision! Think of the free sunny air, of the wide ground, work to be sure, but you're a tough hand. A man will work his fortune there. There's a nice place, Kembletown near Sydney, I saw a man come from there and another from Melbourne, who had been up the Morumbidgee before. They all praise Australia who have been there and have not been emigrants nor gold diggers. Those two classes are fools, take them to any waste country you will. But a man with a small subsistence, who is not too dainty for any offer that may be made him, he's just the person to step into the land

where hands are wanted; takes it easy at first, is huddled about by no one but travels up to some farm, or stays in some town or shows himself in any place where he's welcome."

"That may be true, father, but I can't conceive the idea of leaving my present life, of abandoning all and — —"

"You're taken by surprise. Abandon all? What have you got to abandon? You'll be doing a service everywhere with going. It's a general folly to stick to the country to the last; until starvation pricks you at all sides and you are bundled off without choice and appeal as a cheated and bartered and maltreated emigrant. If there were not this folly of sticking to ones native place there'd be more room in it for the poor beggars who are now shuffled out of it somehow as felons, or colonists or starved corpses. That's my political science, sir. No, you my son, don't you be such a dolt but bring your name to honor again where it's the place to do it."

Allan had become reflective. "Well father," he said, "every serious thing ought to be considered and not to be answered upon impulse. You have come upon me very unexpectedly and I was not at all prepared for a proposition of the kind you have made me. I'll have pondered it well if I can see you this evening or to-morrow. I owe to your fatherly counsel not to dispose of it rashly."

"Right, right, my boy. You can take time till to-morrow, and mind, not over to morrow. A man can decide promptly. I'm going end of this week; for your mother I would have waited longer, because women require a little leisure, but men must be ready and brisk, more so when they are bound for Australia. I have been talking over things with your mother all yesterday evening and all this morning. Now I'll look about me down by the water-side. When you are free this afternoon, will you come to the tap of the 'White Ant'? I've an engagement

there with an acquaintance, second mate of an Australian steamer. For the rest I stay at your mothers, of course."

A curious sensation was left upon Allan by this visit of his father's. It was not much respect and affection that he ever could give him, nor could any harmony come from the re-touching of the natural alliance which narrow-minded Robert Graham had severed so long. Yet as a member of the family, the latter with his neglect of many years had done less harm from a social point of view than the son with the quick action of a second. Allan remembered that. He knew on the contrary that his nearest and dearest would not be glad of a riddance from him. A consultation with faithful uncle Arthur followed his private musings. Allan was certain before that the Australian project would result in nothing more than a well-considered but spontaneous rejection.

Uncle Arthur looked very grave over the problem.

"It's very true what your father says" he argued in course of discussion, "that people who could yet do it with a degree of convenience would best make room in England to the surging rear-guard which else must bear all the visitations of want and over-peopling, while the colonies are not half, not a quarter yielding the profit their vast extensions of waste territory are made for. I who have seen so much of deprivation and struggling for bare existence, I've often thought of how the great wide earth is rich enough and large enough to nourish them all plentifully if they would only dissolve this crowding upon one spot. But Allan," the good man returned with a tender smile to the personal point of the case, "have you not hoped to be useful here? There are many young men who strive rather indifferent of their fellow-creatures, with ambitions not so modest, with aspirations not so moderate as your own, who might gain their golden ends

better in Australia than in England. But have you not hoped to be useful here?"

"I have, but I have also seen that one cannot plan to be useful in some particular way, but must confine oneself to be ready for any chance of usefulness at the best. Those are not my old fancies that bind me here any more. It's not so easy to be useful as it looks."

"But you do not wish to go. You have no longing to found new fortunes abroad?"

"I've no great confidence in my founding fortunes at all and I might be punished for giving up my sure lot here. Besides I have no wish to go, not from pusillanimity, but from an inward repulsion of the idea, simply as if it were out of the question."

"And so it is, my boy. You have manfully taken your place here and if you stay for no greater use it's doing good to the hearts that love you. I am glad for my part that there was nothing in the project," cried the minister, shaking his nephews hand, then, as if reflecting that his treatment of the case might have some selfish influence and little of sound principle in it, he added: "You are a character, Allan, whom God will bless with a part of usefulness, I am sure. We've now done our duty by your answer for your father on the morrow."

If Allan could in any way have been inclined to the plan of trying his luck in the New World, it was unconsciously made least plausible to him by the form in which it was offered, by the father whose ways had never blended with those of his children. If any consideration of family-honor or manly energy should ever drive him from the haunts of his ill-fate and his domestic associations it would not be to join Robert Graham in his career.

Before Allan parted from his uncle and friend that evening, the latter said, recollecting a thing he had wanted to tell him: "I've seen Diana Larkes again, Allan. Coming

from my calls to your mothers and taking a by way to look in upon an old friend of mine, who is a little infirm of late, I come past the theatre and have seen her there two times. Poor girl, poor girl, she'll never be brought to do any good."

They had been obliged to give her up. With what a bleeding heart the gentle clergyman resigned himself to do so, may be imagined, also how Mr. Moffat was first all fire in hopes for the recovered girl and in indignation at her stubbornness in the end.

It was pure stubbornness. Mr. Clare deemed it thus. When he heard her full tale from Allan, he said: "God be thanked, I understand her now. I said at the former period, you know, that I couldn't make her out. I would not think her all bad, yet she was obdurate. That was her unhappy delusion about Richard then. Of course that prospect had dazzled her untutored mind. Stript of that she may have become accessible to be led back."

But she had not. Her distorted mind had only adopted another configuration to repulse the increment of good. It was expressed in her conversation with Allan, it encountered all attempts of the virtuous minister, until his zealous and repeated efforts were at last repelled with impatience and angry heedlessness.

Mr. Clare understood her now from his annals of her cast, but only to grieve over this instance of low-life character. "Look you," he communicated his conclusion to his confidants, "such aberration of disposition is not rare. She has got a ground for blame against one of the so-called better class, and her oppressed, subjugated, spiteful mind feasts on it with a rancorous pleasure. The arrogance that is in humanity exults, be it by rising over its supposed superiors or by drawing them down below itself. All her experience of disdain, of suffering, of degradation now nurses the remembrance of a wrong in venge-

ance upon that class which stands in opposition to her own before a worldly sight. May her natural tendencies be good or bad, the more we exhort her, the more maliciously she defies us and while defying us is lost."

Allan could not get rid of the thought of Diana nevertheless, the wretchedness in which he had seen her had made too great an impression on his mind. The natural suggestion of highly-developed moral feeling maintained too great a repugnance against surrendering to the might of the Dark Spirit. Mr. Clare piously laid the irremisable work of salvation into the inscrutable hand of the Omnipotent, yet, although he subsided into forced inactivity, he was too true an apostle to retire into idle rest. He forgot no strayed lamb of his proper herd, though no more was allowed him for it than a prayer. Neither took Allans spirit rest upon a subject that he had seized with such arduous interest.

Dwelling upon his expeditions to the quarters of the vagrant girl, he sometimes stopped musing, what sort of a chance for honesty might prove capable of enticing her away from her self-chosen abandonment. What expedient was left indeed, as she had rejected all that were feasible? The treacherousness of Richard had perhaps sown a rankling evil after all. It had definitely poisoned a perverted soul. Blinded by the glare of her once-conceived ambition, Diana had been lured to a height of seductive visions from which to fall was to be crushed to death. He thought of Mrs. Rutherbys forwardly taxing him with having a love-design upon her charge and telling him his matrimonial addresses would be disdained. Quite probable, no doubt, ludicrous as the whole proposition sounded. But to find the way again by which that girl might be succoured, who had so strong an adverse will of her own. If she had but fallen in with a pitying woman who might have said to her: ,Come with me and see if you will not find

a friend in me' and tamed the savage creature with loving patience then. But he could not foist Diana upon any of the ladies of his acquaintance, upon his gentle mother, or his young sister or Mrs. Kenyon. There was the warning derived from the experience with the father Larkes, a warning to Allan, that if he wanted to serve those people at great venture he had best confine the risk to his own person. That evening after the conference with uncle Arthur, when he had rejected the upstarting plan or suggestion of redeeming his calamities by a new trial on the plea of making himself useful at home, he worked again at that old wreck of his ideals sunken by the hand of the two Larkes. The apparently untenable fancy that souls well-nigh lost could be and ought to be extracted by the perseverance of dutiful christian men.

It was a conviction current in the opinions and informations he had gathered, that persons grown to full age under the prevailing influence of guilt and decay, were forfeited to this same crime and ruin through the early and deteriorating fashioning of their natures. For this reason Arthur Clares concern had turned to the little children in Dianas haunt and set him to strive for an ascendancy there. But Allan from his peculiarity and position, dwelt more on the condemnation of the seduced than on the unconscious fatality upon the innocent. And when his imagination reverted regretfully to the person that had nearest approached to him upon his enthusiastic mission, he saw Diana, not in her poverty, not in her degradation, but in her youth, as she stood, with not all of humanity wrung out of her yet, beside the corpse of a profane, cursed woman.

There she stood alone, unloving, unbeloved, never having been touched in her young life by tenderer than mercenary appeals, by a better truth than the fitful one of a hard chiding word. Never linked to a purer world but by the treacherous caress of a selfish dandy, forgetful of

nobler principles. A deep remorseful yearning came upon Allans heart as he saw this vision fading then, fading into the night of painfulness he had perceived in his own prison days. —

When Allan delivered the required decision to his father the next morning, the latter gentleman remarked shortly: „All right, if you won't," which curtness implied: „I won't go the length of persuading you to your good if you can't see it yourself." So the matter was settled with admirable brevity. And with the most brisk expedition too did Mr. Graham bring to an end the preliminaries of his journey and loosen the ties that bound him to his native country. As his leave-taking was only negotiating a return to the accustomed state of things, it went off very easily and glibly between him and his Liverpool family. Ere Mrs. Graham had so far collected herself for the exigencies of the case as to propose summoning Ethel from Coketown, the good sire, with unlimited trust in family allegiance though not tested directly, was already going the ensuing morning at daybreak. Allan was the last to bid him adieu, on deck of the Australian steamer, repairing to this last filial duty at the close of work-hours in town, the evening before.

Mr. Grahams parental feelings were not shaken by the disappointment he had met with in his son.

„My boy" he said, looking as broad-chested and sturdy as he could, „I'm near sixty, yet I may make a fortune still. I'm as hearty as any man. When I see a white hair in my whiskers, I pull it out, not for vanity, pooh, but because it looks like old age. But there's no old age in me, sir. I'm beginning now, over there. If I make a fortune, I'll give it to you by my will and testament, for you are the most needy of my children. It's no idle promise, Allan, I will if I have anything to leave."

Allan did not pronounce his farewell just at the mo-

ment when he had secured this valuable promise, but it is about the most important item to be remembered of this final demonstration of Robert Graham. Australia never blabbed out whether the will and testament was ever made, but certainly that country honestly supported the thrifty stranger unto his demise and as to will and testaments, what can people expect from things of which their supervision and vital inspiration is withdrawn?

Finding by and by that his father was inclined to make himself very comfortable below deck and friendly with the intermediate passengers — as a part of wisdom, to arrive-early at the right balance of things the younger Graham judged that the elder one would not be particularly thankful for any more of him. So down he went over the hopping ships ladder, back to his Liverpool pursuits. It was not quite early and not quite late, just such an hour at which Diana might be abroad near the theatre where Mr. Clare had detected her. Upon this latter intelligence Allan had resolved to try and see her there once more, and he bethought himself that he might proceed to the execution of this intent that very night.

The performance was in full action within when he approached the indicated play-house, there was few concourse of people in the street before it, in consequence. He looked about him, prepared to loiter about a good while before attaining his object, to wait in vain quite probably, to strain all his attention and firmness of purpose at all events. His questing glances were pressing forward, when they caught inadvertently side ways the end of a dingy shawl behind a lamp-post. The figure to whom this fluttering drapery belonged, rather in a discreet than an concealed attitude, maintaining its character of discreetness shifted its position quickly and noiselessly. But Allan as swiftly caught the shawl and brought its owner to confront him.

„Have you not changed your mind yet, Diana Larkes?” he asked.

„No, nor don't you expect me to do so. Give me a penny, sir, I'm looking out for pennies here,” with a smile that mocked him.

„You will never change your mind,” Allan persisted undisturbed, „because you have conceived a hatred against us. You are not senseless to the ignominy of your existence, you are not too indolent to be capable of attaining a better one, it is rather an unhappy prejudice which shuts your heart against any wishes for your good. You act upon hatred and ill-will, because you have never been taught to regard and esteem any one.”

„I hate all you self-complacent, honest, honorable gentlemen and ladies, yes, I hate them, because they take all the riches and pleasure of the world for themselves and the credit and honor into the bargain. That's too much. Let them live better if they can, but don't let them say, that they are better. I've seen that. Lying promises they've made me, and as for their charity, we'd be praised for charity, I suppose, if we had money superfluous. I'm cleverer than the rest and don't whine before the alms-givers.”

„You lead all, questions back to money. Have you never conceived another standard than money, can you not reckon by any moral suggestion? Diana, do you hate me?”

„No, I have no reason why I should hate you. You do not talk folly nor mean it and take a deal of trouble with me which I rather would you did not.”

„You have no reproach against me, you have no reason to hate me, then why, oh why, poor unhappy girl, will you not allow me some influence over you? Why will you not accept my counsel and my assistance, why will you not take confidence in a friend and reward him as

yourself by obeying your early detestation of a depraved, injurious life?"

"For all the motives that I am tired now of telling you again and which one — one like you doesn't alter. I am in for it now. I am somebody in my place at least, Mr. Graham, I am the cleverest there, the most versatile, useful, elegant, ha, ha, there. They hold me in respect and appreciation, there are even those there who think it worth their while to admire me and cajole me."

"And you must know all the time how their appreciation is hollow, sordid, heartless, and how their attachment will probably tie you faster unto sin. Diana, if you will not come over to honesty as a lonely, destitute girl, does there remain yet any way that you would come? Would you come if an honest man were to marry you, would you enter upon a new life as my wife, Diana?"

She looked askance at him, meditated one moment and then replied: "Why do you ask me that? I know its only a jest."

"A jest! I have never jested with you, Diana. It is a grave and earnest subject enough we talk about. You will take no confidence to another society of mankind, because you apprehend to be contemptuously regarded, therefore, to clear away this hindrance to your rescue, I ask you to be my wife."

"You are not proud. You do not love me, Mr. Graham?"
"I wish to give a purer and more hopeful life to you. Let me know your answer, Diana."

There he stood before her, the new wooer of the errant girl, demanding her hand out of the depths of his pity, of the intensity of his moral aspiration, the magnanimity of his humane emotions. Saying the words of extraordinary sacrifice with the plain, unassuming expression which delicacy and the opinion of fulfilling a Christian duty dictated. The girl whom Richard Lansdale had left after

holding her in his embrace for the love of her beauty and her artful grace.

"You would give me a right. A right and position which I could rely on and which you would uphold and protect. Yes, Mr. Graham, that's a fair offer and I thank you for it. I will marry you if you ask me. That's fairness, sir," she mused, eyeing him with an admiring glance. "You know what I am, sir. Richard Lansdale knew it, but he could not withstand it in cool temper. Now you'll see that I'll snap my fingers at his money, for I wanted to get free from that horrible misery and I do it, though you are poor; but I don't mind poverty and I'll turn myself about well as your wife. You won't deceive me, Mr. Graham, you'll right me, you are worth Richard Lansdale a thousand times."

Diana had something of Caesar in her composition, who like her rather demanded to be the first man in the last place, than the last one in the first. With Caesarean equanimity or self-control she took in the principal features of her wonderful change of fortune. She consented now without demur to Allans desire of following him and leaving her former refuge behind for ever.

"You must now let me take care of you and provide an abiding-place for you until the time that I can take you under my own roof" her protector said.

They went on together to Arthur Clares residence and Allan knocked. Martha gave a half satisfied, half dubious grunt when she beheld the young man of the house entering accompanied by the unkempt waif. Allan led quickly on to the little parlor, the door of which uncle Arthur was just opening to see if it were his nephew who had come in. The ray of a smile passed over his benevolent face as he discovered the double arrival. Allan addressed him hastily: "I have brought Diana home with me, uncle; she is going to be my wife soon."

Uncle Arthur opened his mouth and shut it again in extreme astonishment. He led the way into the room and had them both seated, then he took his old arm-chair himself, arranged his spectacles and looked at the two kindly and earnestly. He had made a pause of silence, as if to repress and regulate the first outbreak of his wonder, so that it hurt nobody and do justice to Allans exaltation of effort.

.Then he said, directing himself to Diana: „So you have come here at last — and as my nephews affianced wife.”

„Yes, sir,” Diana answered, „Mr. Graham has offered to marry me. I hope you won’t be angry that our relations are going to be changed.”

„Oh Diana Larkes, if you only will love him, if you only will love him,” cried the gentle minister, rising and seizing her hand. „Say that you will, my child.”

The convicts daughter, being surprised in her turn at the indulgent welcome she received, was not prepared to give an asseveration of feeling like that required of her. Allan therefore, during the dumb pause she made interposed: „I hope that our sentiments are mutually cordial and sincere and will tend to good, dear uncle. I am glad that Diana has promised to yield herself to my guidance and protection, which I can never give her so fully as in the case which has happened, my laying claim to her as a husband. You will take Diana into your and Marthas care until I may prepare in a slight way for our marriage?”

Diana slept that night under a decent roof, dearly won for an altered future, and her promised husband asked for a bed at his friends the Kenyons, not wishing to resort to his mother prematurely at that hour.

Chapter VIII.**Startling News.**

The young Lansdale couple were enjoying a comfortable hour in the dainty breakfast-parlor of their Coketown mansion. Ethel had poured out the second cup of tea from the little silver teapot and the scene looked as pretty and inviting as such scenes ought to look. The shadow which the Liverpool family had detected at Christmas was either latent for being farther removed from contrast with brighter prophecies, or it was dealt with conclusively when the right balance between reality and fancy was sensibly attained. Ethels position in her husbands circle was satisfactorily defined even before her last visit to her maternal home. Miss Ansted had been too unpolite and blunt in her demonstrations of emnity towards her niece-in-law not to be curbed soon by an energetic protest from Ethels husband. Disinclined as she was to forego her preceding relations with her favorite nephew she condescended to a compromise of frequenting at Richards house, prying into and finding fault with his establishment as much as she would and as little asked for her opinion as it respectively suited the young folks. But all in an urbane, measured way, not a word too open, nor a look which courtesy could not explain to advantage.

Richard was holding the most pleasant, intimate colloquy with his wife. It was evident in his every gesture and word that he was excessively fond of her, ay, that he had become fonder of her since she occupied that sweet, confidential position by this hearth. Ethel had taken the reins as mistress of his house with such consummate aptness and dignity, that he admired her with enthusiasm and silently exulted over the dexterous choice he had made

on the matrimonial field. She at once was counted among the flower of the local high society, her personal gifts made her as courted a lady in the evening-saloons as her refined womanliness made her a lovely ornament of home. She surpassed Richards original ambitions which had induced him to the renewal of his proposals and if ever his heart had sought affinity in hers it now glowed with entirely novel fervor in all the rich colors he found in his diamond. His aunts haughtiness was quenched by the simple force of social triumph. Mrs. Lansdale was the very lady to augment the credit, to increase the glory of her husbands commercial standing and successes. She was lofty and self-possessed enough to ascend and hold any throne which her fortune-favored spouse might hope to place for her as a seat.

The letters by the mornings post were brought in at that moment by a dainty page in livery. Their repast being finished, Ethel cast her looks upon her mothers epistle. Richard left his part of the remittance aside yet to snatch a glimpse at the days paper. He was ensconced behind its important columns, while his lady opened the envelopes and began her perusal of their contents with Mrs. Grahams missive.

Not a noise stirred in the room, the paper did not rustle even, there was no movement upon the table of Ethels hand among the letters, she did not breathe a syllable of what she read.

By and by, having reached the end of an interesting paragraph, Richard looked up. It had only been intended for a cursory glance, but the latter was detained and transformed into an earnest look of inquiry by the appearance of hts wifes face. Ethel sat, her eyes fixed to the page she held with a firm, rigid hand, that petrifying sternness gathering in her features which among her intimates was known to bode a storm in her.

„Have you got disagreeable news?” Richard asked, promptly evidencing his concern.

„Yes,” said Ethel, sinking her hand with the letter into her lap, „strange, unprecedented news. Allan is about to be married — to a young girl my mother calls Diana Larkes, whom we know from having once engaged her as a seamstress, the daughter of one of the men you saved Mr. Rosen from.”

If suddenly a shot had been fired upon Richard at the same time as Ethel pronounced her sentence, the excitement produced in him could not have been more unexpected or of more surprising immediateness. Richard sprang from his seat and all his habitual placidity ceded to an indignant, sparkling agitation.

„He is going to marry Diana! What does it mean?!” he cried; then, recollecting that he had given vent to a most exaggerated outburst of feeling he said again in a controlled, calm voice: „What does it mean, my dear?”

„It means that my brother from a mad idea of mistaken generosity has declared his intention of wedding a strange girl, whom my mother describes as appallingly low and unworthy of him, in order to make a headlong experiment of reforming her. Have you ever seen such an exaltation, can one conceive the possibility of such a sacrifice being made for a visionary good!”

„For a visionary good! Ha, ha. It simply cannot be done, Ethel, this marriage cannot but be prevented. It is flat insanity or or — —.”

„Prevented? No, Richard, the thing is a fact already. The girl is staying at uncle Arthurs to be married next week. Allan has introduced her at once as his promised wife. And oh, my mother is in such distress about it! She writes so upset and mournfully. She sees Allan sealing his unhappiness, linked to the worst of disenchantments in the future. Oh,” moaned the sister, clasping her hands

to her face and ruminating upon the news with ineffectual lament; „oh, to have that common, slovenly girl for the companion of his days, to have her calling him by his dear, dear name, the deceitful, vicious creature, to give to her the place that should have belonged to a comforting angel, pure and loving as himself! What will become of all his feelings if he blindly sacrifices himself to such a barren, thankless soul? Mamma has seen her and says she shows herself much too cold for what has been done for her. I know, I understand what her forms of writing mean, I see her tears between the lines. How could Allan do this, how could it occur to him to sully home with such a bride.”

„I tell you, Ethel, he must be made to abandon the idea — —,”

„Diana Larkes! I remember Miss Larkes, she called herself Charlotte then — she had a crafty way and uncle Arthur, even uncle Arthur argued inaccessibility from her. A seamstress at the best, with no education, and secret, sneaking manners — —”

„Ethel, stop and listen to me. This proposition of your brothers is a thing which we cannot accept. Diana Larkes is a thief, absolutely a thief and a dissolute character — —.”

„I fear she is, I fear she is.”

„I know she is. It is quite impossible for an honest man to marry her and bring her into a decent family.”

„And yet Allan will do it. We are not in a preliminary stage of uncertainty. Oh Richard, help me to bear this, share with me in this terrible regret which Allan has unwittingly caused us.” She sank upon her husbands breast to pour out there the flowing gushes of her unexpected grief. But Richard, though his sentiments were roused to an extent fully equal to her own, was in no mood to whisper consolations or to condole with her. His mind was bent on harder things than passive sympathy and

repinings. He read the letter his wife handed to him. „If he will do it, Ethel,” he said gravely, „Allan must step out of his former associations, the intercourse that corresponded with his proper station must be broken up.”

„Richard!”

„Your mother will not be reconciled to this offensive match either, she cannot but retire from her former intimacy with her son. She will have warned him and then leave him to go his own ways.”

„Richard, nothing will ever step between the supreme affection which my mother and Allan bear to each other. Allans resolution springs from motives, which in this instance I call a delusion, never too vainly, never too regretfully to be deplored, but it contains the grand nobility, the boundless elevation of his character, which verily stops at nothing. Whatever trials he may engender by his wild attempt, we cannot but recognize the superiority of Allans purposes in the mere conception of such an immolation.”

„My dear, when Allan marries Diana Larkes, you will never enter his house.”

„Will you forbid me!!”

„I will. I have done justice to your brother and my early acquaintance, when an untoward accident lowered him undeservedly in the prejudiced view of the uninitiated, I have done the duty of an unprejudiced man by him and upheld him in casual discussions to be undamaged by his adversity. The same liberal opinions I proved to you when I asked you, pleaded of you a second time to become my wife. I set the ordinary judgment of the world at naught. But when your brother, when Allan Graham chooses to push into the mire of his own accord, by force of his own extravagancies, to demean himself purposely into the position, into which mischance has flung him, then let him do so without anybodys trying to support

him any longer. Let him attach himself to the society which the cursed prison time has brought him near to, but then we cannot know him any more."

Paralysed with amazement Ethel stared at the ground as she listened to her husbands expositions. Was it an indulgence that Richard Lansdale had married her, was it a praiseworthy magnanimity that had detained him from trampling upon Allans fame? Since she had associated with Richard in the intimate communion of their present relation, had she never stumbled upon slighter indications than this; that his enlightened views and hers were very far asunder? Had she never detected that he was disposed to shun the associations, which to her were among the dearest things of earth? That their specific valuations of facts and spiritual subjects fell out very different? She had perhaps often encountered such and dazedly wondered, she had found objects too grossly opposed to her preconceived persuasions, but she must needs construe them and mis-shape them to be reconciled to her understanding of the case. Richard was too indolently good natured to throw off his easy friendliness towards his wifes family in private intercourse with her, while his short-comings in active demonstration could hitherto be laid yet at the door of the disturbing and implacable Coketown connexions. But what a tone was this, into which his rage, his bewilderment at Allans project drove him?

Ethel had gathered her ideas and gained words. She sprang up and resting her hand on the table between them confronted her husband with eyes flashing unwonted passion, fierce as when a dignified woman releases her customary control. "You have never known him" she cried.

"Don't say that you won't know him any more, your expressions testify that you never did. You do not understand his courage of martyrdom, you do not understand the sense of the subject — —"

„Don't employ metaphors, my dear. I pronounce a simple fact. Whatever your brother may please to do, Diana Larkes shall never come into contact with my family and if your mother says yea to his plan I must trouble you to write to her that I insist upon restraining your intercourse with Liverpool to its utmost limits. It was never convenient to have your family visiting here, and as this can now be done less than ever, I shall as a matter of course, retire completely from the acquaintance.”

„What is this?” exclaimed Ethel awakening more and more to Richards point of view.

„We have considered, when you broached the subject, that a visit from your mother here could not but stir up disagreeable encounters with persons who acquainted with unhappy family details might see no cause like ourselves to handle them delicately — —”

„Yes, and as I saw some justice in your adverting to Miss Ansteds rudeness, I deferred to your promises of smoothing it over better with sufficient time, in order to spare my dear mother the danger of being snubbed by this unlady-like aunt of yours.”

„Aunt Helen, Ethel, if ever she was to be reconciled to yourself, which I have made my object for the sake of general pleasantness, could never be presumed upon to resign her prejudices against your family, but at present, I concede her full right and reason to eschew the remembrance of your former ties within the sphere in which it is her prerogative, and ours, the Lansdales, to move. I will have no more trouble about this. I never promised you to reconcile aunt Ansted to your mother. Far was it from me to be so exacting as to wish to rend asunder the ties between mother and daughter more than necessary, I had every tacit consideration for your natural filial sentiments, not doubting that your sagaciousness and womans wit would of itself find the bounds which it were not

feasible to overstep. I did not think that my indulgence should be put to the stretch of pointing them out to you."

"If you were minded to despise my family, you should have told me so before our marriage," Ethel spoke in a hard, collected voice.

"Don't call it disdain, but I thought that the practical side of the affair would be understood by plain common-sense. You ought to have discerned the divergence between the position which you left and that which you assumed without demanding it of me to expound upon what I did for you."

"Ah, you were conferring a grace upon me when you married me, Richard?"

"What will you call it? I had a sincere affection and regard for you, unaltered from the olden times as I told you, and for that I made no account of disturbances which would have detained many another man. No, I felt all the more impelled to patent your worth and free you from the press of adversity by securing to you the sphere of exercise which you are most eminently endowed for. All this defers to your proper superiority and qualities which have made you a prized and precious wife to me — —"

"If those disturbances had detained many another man, would that they had you!" finally Ethel broke in.

"I am the last person to make a merit of my deeds, but I should have thought, yes, I should have deemed it just that you had felt yourself indebted for some thankfulness, for some especial, appreciation to me. I should have held it as a natural suggestion under the circumstances that you would evince a particular regard for the concessions I had made, towards me. Not to carry it with such a high hand between us two and go ahead of me with such careless arrogance. You are a charming woman with your proud comportment and high spirit,

Ethel, a victorious lady in society, but you should know better than to turn them upon me. Calm yourself, don't look so fierce, — collect yourself and see that I am right. I enforce nothing that I could spare to you, to your affections, but you must see the convenience of things and desist from asserting your unhappy relations too much."

„Richard, a great mistake has taken place. We did not understand each other when we rennited for marriage, because our opinions and ideas were too far removed from and strange to each other. From having been friends from earliest time it never occurred to me to sift our world-wide differences better, I did never fathom their existence. I said just now you did not know my brother Allan, much less did I know you. Unhappily our alliance has been concluded under the sway of this erroneous estimation. I never came upon the belief that you could join the common blindness so as to imagine yourself too good in comparison with a virtuous, cultured, long-enduring lady like my mother or with Allan and all the rest. But one thing I tell you, having arrived late at this comprehension, if my family is to be slighted here I shall not submit to it."

„Not submit to it? How? Above all mistakes and surprisals you are my wife, the alliance is made as you say, and in good faith. I have not intentionally withheld any explication which should have served to our better understanding henceforth. As my wife I have the right over you to enjoin my pleasure with regard to your intercourse. I have all justification in this case, particularly as relates to Allan, who seems determined to pollute the connexion."

„If a husband can enjoin his pleasure against the natural feelings and judgment of his wife, the last redress is reached perhaps, that he must cease to be her husband."

Richard was startled. That warning from a woman who had secured the privilege of being his wife!

The astonishment damped his anger and collected all his supreme self-consciousness to wave it off with easiness and dignity. He went to look for his walking coat and hat. „My dear” he said, returning to the room where the discussion had taken place, „into what a heat we have got ourselves. It is impossible that our misunderstanding can be so deeply rooted as it would look. While I revelled in the contentment of showing such a proud, beautiful Mrs. Richard Lansdale to society, I rejoiced in the trust of having a devoted, liege, addicted spouse near my heart. And you rebel, you oppose yourself out of the influence of your warm, true emotions for your kindred. I love you for them, for the unsophisticatedness of a womans heart. But it is fatality, here reigns simple fatality: you must keep it to your heart and consult your prudence in social questions. Don't be precipitate, it arises all from exaggeration. In a moderate frame of mind you will see the justice of all I say. Therefore I will not goad you on any longer, and give no more food to irritation, but leave you to yourself, to your private clear-headedness. I'm off to the factory, love, I am sorry to leave you not better reconciled, but it's the wisest thing I can do.”

Ethel remained immovable in the room for a long while after her husbands departure, resting her elbow on the table and leaning her brow upon her hand. At last, at last she got up, looked about her in the scene of the mornings altercation as though she had become quite confused upon ordinary subjects by her prolonged fit of abstraction, by all the wild meditations that had coursed through her brain. With slow, heavy step she left the room. She went to her private apartment and stayed there for some time without giving a sign to the wondering dependants of the house. Then she called her maid, Marian Parker.

„I am taking a journey to Liverpool,” she told the

astonished girl, „put some things of immediate necessity together, I shall go by the next train.”

„No sudden death has occurred in your family, ma'm?” ventured to exclaim the lively Parker, struck by the discomposed appearance of her mistress.

„No, but a family event which necessitates my present departure. I leave a message with you for your master, when he comes back, that I have gone by the afternoon-train to Liverpool.”

Ethel's passion of indignation had resolved upon showing her husband by this decided proof how she meant to receive his tyrannical and unworthy pretensions. She flew to those in whom he had wounded her to the core of her sensibility, in rash, impulsive protest. As yet benumbed by the shock of the preceding explanations she sat, impenetrable and immovable, rattling away to her treasured refuge. The fellow-passengers in the railway carriage received no indications of the boiling, heaving torrents pent up in the bosom of that silent, stately lady, whose gaze rested fixedly on the ground before her, whose posture never changed to take notice of the outward world. But a change expanded within her, as the city of her girlhood drew near, her soul melted and thawed. When after the end of that strange tour she stood under her mothers doorpost, she combated with difficulty against her starting tears.

The lamps were lighted already when she arrived, a light had overruled the early dusk in Mrs. Grahams parlor. Mr. Moffat had dropped in to discuss with her the important subject which was paramount just then among that circle of friends. How they both looked up, transfixed with dumb surprise, when Ethel hastily came in upon them, alone, with all the marks of a violent disturbance on her brow. She did not heed the presence of the old, intimate friend, she rushed into her mothers arms and held her in

a tight, impassioned embrace „Ethel, my daughter, for Heavens sake, what has happened?”

„I have parted in anger from Richard, he was so cruel, so unlike my meanest fancies of him. Oh mamma, my own dear, dear mamma, that I have ever left you for the love I bore Richard Lansdale!”

Mrs. Grahams fright reached its climax, she looked in pale and trembling apprehension upon her agitated child.

When she came to ask for a collected explanation of this dire incident, Mr. Moffat had noiselessly disappeared to leave their sudden and painful confidence unwitnessed. Ethel related the tale of that mornings crushing dissension with Richard, concluding again with her firm assertion that she would never submit to a similar exaction.

„Oh,” exclaimed Mrs. Graham, „what a misfortune is this. Oh God, you have sent us a severe trial, if a disunion will spread between Ethel and Richard! I saw, ah, I saw that there was many a gap in your contentment; one has to get over such inevitably in life. But this is a matter of undeniable weight, one you must fight out against your husband. Ah, what a pass to have come to! I hope that Richard has been hasty and excited, I believe that he has a better nature than to do you such injury upon calm reflection.”

„Hasty? Yes, I presume that he will retract in some degree. But, mamma, there is this truth in the exaggeration of his excitement, that he has spoken a piece of his mind which I would never have sought in him. He has enlarged upon views and opinions which absolutely should not have been there. His ideas are mean, his principles are narrow, his generosity is tinsel. He claims gratitude for having wedded me. That’s the worth of the love I obeyed when I left your house nine months ago. He claims marks of gratefulness where I gave my life into his.

hands in trust and appreciation of what I thought him to be. I fear he is as disappointed as I am myself."

"Ethel, Ethel, don't dwell upon this disappointment. Let us wait for reason to come into Richard, let us simply uphold the right he trifles with. In the height of just resentment we will not embitter our spirit against one who is now allied to us by the blessing of God. Darling, it was not your mothers fate either to have her happiness made by harmony with her husband. I am not strange to the disenchantment of ideal imaginings and unreal hopes, and yet I am not weary of them and would not throw one shred of them away. Richard has sunk to the level of common men, ah me, my love, that is the watch-word of reality."

"Barrenness, aridity, deadly frost is its lesson, is it not, mamma?"

"No, but resignation oftener, meseems, than joyful result. Only right and duty can be maintained." And her judgment having delivered its sentence, her motherly affliction broke forth unrestrainedly in sobs and low weeping.

"It is hard to give up the expectance of happiness for our dear ones. There is such happiness in love. Little Maud is happy, but you and Richard, whom we thought so much of, have come to this, and Allan, Ethel, Allan resigns his claim in his fanaticism of charity. It is a fanaticism, for whatever he may hope for good he takes the full chance too of ending in the bitterest mischief."

"Oh mamma, how could he do it."

"In his courage and self-abnegation which few would attempt besides him. Since he asked Diana Larkes in marriage, he even has seen more, I think, what a vista she opens to his future. She is not one of those repentant, humble creatures whose better instincts reign but for unlucky misguidance, she stands at bay, so to say, and appals me to regard her as the wife of my son. But

Allans word is spoken, there is no horror or discouragement that can stay him yet. It is no use to discern warnings, they are only an aggravation of distress at present."

So the evening wore on, melancholy at the same time as fraught with tenderness. In Coketown Ethels quick decision gave another aspect. Richard returning in the afternoon with no inkling of finding his home deserted, only discussed with himself perhaps the possible attitudes in which his high-tempered lady might await him and the manner in which they were to be met. The servant at the door told him that Miss Ansted was in the drawing-room.

"Didn't Mrs. Lansdale receive her?" Richard inquired.

"Mrs. Lansdale has gone to Liverpool by the afternoon train, sir."

"Gone to Liverpool!" cried the laconic menials master in amazement.

"My mistress has left a note for you, sir."

Chapter IX.

Mrs. Allan Graham.

"I fear," said Mrs. Sidney Adams in that timid round-about manner significative of the purport of her sentence lying deeper than the beginning of it, addressing her liege lord: "I fear Allans wedding will but turn out a very poor affair."

"It hardly can be otherwise" her husband made answer.

"But is it not a pity, dear? Allan ought to have as nice a wedding as the rest of us, for he is indeed the best of us all and pre-eminently deserves to have the grand points in his life attended with all honor and due."

"He is above them, don't fret about that. A man who

can come to a resolve like his does not care for the shape of ceremonials. He has other things in view."

"I know that. Still I am sorry that the solemnity is to be so bare, so undistinguished in comparison with right, festive weddings. I'm vexed with it for Allans sake, and even a little sorry for Dianas. Now, as you don't want me to be present at the ceremony, Sidney dear, may I at least give her one of my pretty dresses, that would be nice for the occasion?" asked the little pleader, sorely crossed already by some oppositions to her innocent suggestions.

"Give one of your dresses to Charlotte — to Diana Larkes?" After a momentary halt, Mr. Adams concluded to her relief: "Why, little woman, there can be no harm in that."

"That's something then, dear. She'd be quite a nice bride in my lavender-colored muslin. I'm glad you have assented to this, love. But I wouldn't give up teasing you to go to the wedding, if it were not that mamma herself will not be there. Allans wedding, and none of us taking notice, who would ever have thought it! And Diana must feel as if we all hated her, and she can't be quite beyond us when Allan will live with her as his wife."

"I admire your brother, Maud, he has done what I could not have brought myself to do. His perceptions are exalted, his purposes are so grand, I own that his strength of endurance exceeds mine. But the poor soul he saves can not be confounded with him. In several senses at least she cannot take the position of Mr Grahams sisters, she is not like you, my pure, ingenuous darling, to corroborate even your pretty fancies about her."

"But Allan will educate and raise her in time and could not we help him a little?"

"I hope he will, but we must see that. I am afraid his illusions may deceive him. It is a venture, which

perhaps but in justice to pudence is so rare. A true missionary should stake all, yet he will not feel obliged to marry like your brother."

"Dear me," interposed funny Maud, "of course that cannot belong to his calling. He would be embarrassed by demands, wouldn't he? It was chance that made Allans choice. But there's a sentence in the bible that says forgive me, Sid, that I don't know how nor where that says, whosoever saveth one soul on earth shall be loved in Heaven and blest. That's what Allan will be, for he'll save this one soul in his way and I hope other people will look for the rest of such souls as well in their way."

"Amen," quoth the pastor.

"And" argued the indefatigable parsons wife, proceeding in her conquest of problems, "mustn't we be alive too and mustn't you trust me to do good without coming to harm, you pedantic old Sidney?"

Which question he settled whith a kiss, which certainly would not compromise him in any further imposition of his particular notions

A graver conference was held upon the subject of Allans marriage in uncle Arthurs study, the evening before the day of the wedding. The strictly principled minister deemed it appropiate still to enjoin some earnest precepts or relative reflections upon his nephew, on the eve of his stepping to the culmination of his ardent project. As Mrs. Graham had mentioned, the precariousness of his plan was much aggravated by Dianas reserve of emotions, which might easily be interpreted as callousness. And as that lady had concluded with a sigh: Allans word was given away beyond any sombre portension of the future.

The young man looked with fixed resolve upon tommors consequential act, the elder one, already by ex-

perience advised not to stray too imaginatively beyond material realities, brought their colloquy to bear upon these.

„My boy, you are going to do a good and noble deed, you propose to offer a sacrifice to virtue. Could it be possible that any one of us should give you a hesitating approbation in this? No, dear nephew, not in the exact sense, it could only be in the fear, that you were attempting something too great. Many individuals have not the courage for sacrifice, but there are those too, who possessing this valiantness, find unexpectedly that they have not the perseverance requirable for it. A sacrifice mostly is but half done with the resolve and its declaration, it is the life long toil, it is the constant demand upon our best energies that probes its validity. Oh Allan, you will need much patience — will you have that patience?”

„I pray God to give it to me and as far as a man can vouch for himself I promise you to show it.”

„The hallowed vision that induced you to this step, the exaltation of Christian love will sometimes fade and pale before the earthly troubles, the mundane deviations caused by her, whom you so strangely put into a place for which she was never properly prepared. Diana will test your strength and endurance; for her sake, for yours, for the sake of your blessed determination, do not give way. She has faculties undeveloped, she has understandings crippled by her historys misfortune, she has acquired moral excrescences obnoxious to a cultured breeding, which will start forth and stand confessed in disheartening numbers as they never yet could, during your married life. I see it coming and I pray, I pray, Allan, that you may be able to finish the work as you began it.”

„I hope I know the demands upon myself, uncle.”

„You are full of hope and will, dear boy. So you ought to be with your enthusiastic plan before you, and

yet the unfathomed actuality may abate your energy. Whatever your wife may prove, beware that she does not draw you down, take care that you always carry her on with strong, unrelenting arm, higher, higher, if she exerts herself or not. You can relax, you can tire, you can stand still when it would appear as if you were knocking at a stone instead of a human heart, and thinking the great turning-point of your life a failure, weaken so as to join the ruin of aspirations around you. Although I hold you so high and love you so proudly, Allan, I put this warning image before you, for in my office I have seen many things like it."

"I am not afraid, uncle."

"Give me your hand, my boy." The two humane relations clasped each others hand and uncle Arthur said in a low, reverent tone: "If you will stand firm in your holy faith, in all that love has given you and will give you perennially, and preserve your charity unweakened by its manifold experiences, then Gods blessing be on you and aggrandize your work with its power and inspiration."

Notwithstanding the anxious cares attending Allans matrimonial prospects, Mr. Clare turned with a brighter face from the aspect of his beloved nephews future than he did from giving his farewell to Mrs. Richard Lansdale, who had left again for Coketown shortly before this present eve of her brothers wedding. His advice had been resorted to in Ethels grievance and he gave it as one who sadly resigns to sue the perfection of happiness and but desires to fulfil the spirit of duty according to his perception.

Richard had not delayed to reclaim his wife from the sudden retreat she took in Liverpool, trying, according to his custom, to make the disagreeable affair as easy and of little moment as he could. A letter of his arrived at Mrs. Grahams the day following upon Ethels appearance,

affably demanding when Mrs. Lansdale intended to return and what dispositions were to be communicated to the domestics to that effect. The epistle containing no eloquence and no demonstration of sentiment but its striking shortness, Ethel sent her husband an answer which as much disdained to be a statement of impressions and ideas, which was equally short, but occasioned Mr. Richard to make a visit to Liverpool.

He entered his mother-in-laws house sooner than he had reckoned for, to dispute his wifes rebellion and enforce his right to rule her movements. He discovered that this lady would not suffer herself to be trifled with. His impatience to appropriate her again, most of all under the circumstances relating to Allans wedding, was yet severely tortured and tried. It was a real triumph of Richards composedness that it did not break out into worse ruptures. Ethel flatly refused a reconciliation until her husband should concede from his exactions and honor her just postulations. The vindication of her natural alliances, to which Richard Lansdale yielded at last, seeing that absolute despotism could no be imposed in his conjugal regimen, still met with not unconditional assent from thorough-going Ethel Graham that was. He would grant the latter unrestricted access to any members of the family which it might please her to visit, regarding this concession as apart for the satisfaction of his wifes feelings, scrupulously denying the participation of her Coketown relations in this treaty of union. Here was the point where Ethel had to make a concession to a breach against her family-pride, which only venerated uncle Clares counsel impelled her to overcome. Richards opposition to her kin, never devoloped so completely but for its having been made an object of contention to his rather obstinate propensities, had taken all the charm out of her married life and thrown her back upon the hard resisting tendencies of her character. Her nature,

imperious in the austere consciousness of virtue, was never prone to bend before the trivial imperiousness of external powers. But Richard and Ethel had now come to a balance of their strength, both held the point which each would not overstep and if the bond that bound them was not to be torn, each one was obliged to submit. Arthur Clare understood this and made his niece see it like him. Richard Lansdale could not be induced to grant more than he did, his acceptable relations with the Grahams were broken since the moment that the present controverse arose, and whatever pangs this state of things implied, Ethels allegiance with him was too holy before the face of God, if not before the face of man, to be deliberately loosened or severed by the disappointments which were fast auguring from henceforth.

Leaving her filial affection behind in Liverpool, she re-entered her Coketown mansion to fulfil the duties of a wife. Alighting from the carriage and ascending the stonesteps on her husbands arm, the Lansdale household saw her again, unchanged, without any marks of emotion, if she held herself not a thought more straight perhaps and looked around her less than she formerly did with affection and interest. The whispers of love were dead and only the spirits of womanly pride survived. — But these, though they had waged war with Richard, aims, substracted so little from Mrs. Lansdales beauty and her adapt ness for the ends which he had sued her to fulfil that the husband was much the pleasanter of the reconciled pair.

The interviews and conferences, the pretensions and admissions over, Mrs. Graham was left alone to her sad thoughts. Such is peace which rests upon the shield of war. Violent and agitating moments had they passed through, words had flown like arrows whose sting is not drawn out with the shaft. Richards concessions were worth nothing to the heart, notwithstanding that they proved his

desire to omit disgraceful extremes in the misunderstandings with his wife. It had been a great oblation of his to this laudable purpose that he consented to give Mrs. Lansdale the freedom of her brothers house after his impending marriage having been effectuated. But Ethel raised the cry of, conquer or die to carry this point, little as she probably would care to avail herself of the fruit of the victory, namely, to call upon the hospitality of Mrs. Graham that was to be.

Allans wedding-morn awoke with a haze upon it and a slippery sort of individuality about it, that did not allow one to draw certain inferences about the progress of the day. The decisive moment drew near, nine o'clock a.m., and the sun did burst through the fog as if the occasion were just as magnificent a one as the nuptials of Mr. R. Lansdale of Coketown and Miss Ethel Graham of Liverpool.

Diana Larkes, very near being Mrs. Allan Graham now, stood in uncle Arthurs modest church, looking about her from under her deep-hued lashes, as if she were taking in all the accessories of the impending celebration, rather like studying some novel curiosities, feeling herself under the pressure of the important act nevertheless. The simple wedding-party was arraigned under the porch beside her, only the bridegroom, faithful Martha and Mr. Moffat. The Rev. Mr. Clare had retired into the vestry and was presently issuing forth ready for the performance of his office.

The nuptial couple did not look less wellmatched than many couples do that come up to the altar-rails. Diana's slender figure looked very tidy in Mauds tasteful dress and with her fair locks orderly arranged — under the supervision of Martha, the height of unobjectionable propriety therefore. Allan stood beside her, a manly, unpresuming form, of innate nobleness enough to take the hand of the gentlest bride and homely enough to match with a lowly one.

The service was on the point of beginning, when an additional guest darkened the entrance of the sacred building and Lloyd Graham stepped in, taking his place quietly behind his brother, a silent best-man during the procedure. As the question: „Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?” was pronounced by the parson, Mr. Moffat stepped forward and said „I do.”

So Diana bound herself to love, honour and obey her husband to the end of her existence and Allan made her his with the ring that means indissoluble union to Christians reared like him.

Never in his long years of service had Mr. Clare spoken the formula of his weighty solemnity with deeper fervor and more profound uplifting of his prayers to God. His performances of divine office had constantly maintained in him the warm sincerity and humble devotion, with which his soul swelled when first he assumed the mighty attributes of his calling. But to impress each word of the simple marriage-service as an exhortation, an appeal to a dumb heart, to make them reach the ears of his hearers with the vast fulness of their truth, this with his soul overflowing with love and individual wishes for peace and good, was rendering Mr. Clares composure a strong effort and the solemnity of the ceremony a breath of mans inmost emotion. Mr. Moffat, susceptible of his friends agitation, allowed a sob to become audible, which caused Diana to look towards him in astonishment. This latter figure of the proceedings was perfectly calm and self possessed, her voice was clear and her handwriting in the register afterwards did honor to Mrs. Rutherbys encomium of it. When Allan had kissed his bride and they were sallying out from the vestry, having shaken hands all round, Diana lifted her hand and looked at the wedding-ring on her finger. Allan was talking the while to his brother.

„Martha has prepared a wedding-breakfast for us, she told me, you'll join us, Lloyd, won't you?"

„Certainly" responded the guest, who though uninvited was cordially made welcome.

A few stragglers were in the church, who had observed that a wedding was going on, some boys stood in the entrance and half-a-dozen women or so were scattered over the seats.

As the party came out and walked along the aisle a shrivelled figure darted from a back-pew and stood in their way.

„Aye, aye" cried the jeering tone of Mrs. Rutherford, „so you're married, Charly, and great's your luck indeed. God bless you, my deary, though you do forget me, your poor mither. Poor old Ann Rutherford, who clad you and fed you and has come low for the grief that you caused her. God bless you, Charly. Give me a little present on this joyful day. Let it be a little silver to make merry with at home over your luck. Tell your husband to give me something, deary."

Allan hesitated, as the old creature hovered before them stretching out her aged hand with eager supplication. Finally he gave her a small gift „As it is our wedding-day, old woman, though I won't give you more for fear that you spend it ill."

Diana's face became animated suddenly. „Why do you give her money," she cried, „I owe nothing to Mrs. Rutherford. She'd not have fed me a single day if she had not expected to make herself paid, and she has done so long ago at cost of my misery and my character and all that I have wanted. She's a snivelling hypocrite if she takes you in to give her charities."

„Aye, deary, and how do you pay me now! So you cast us off, your old friends, who never will forget you — —," the hag raised her finger as if to pronounce some

terrible anathema, when Allan, little edified by his brides demeanor, which could not just be described as that of a shrinking one, hurried her off, without being able though to impede her saying: „I have no business with you any more and as a married lady I'll know how to get rid of your importunities.” Which assumed title ,a married lady' so tickled the old dames muscles of risibility that she remained giggling and chattering under the church-porch and took a donative from Lloyd, who was the last of the assistants, giggling and chattering still.

Martha had laid out a regular wedding-breakfast in uncle Arthurs parlor, and all her friendship for her masters nephew had gone into the dishes and the tea-service, notwithstanding that she shook her head and grumbled over his unauspicious choice. She had presided over the preparations to make a Mrs. Allan Graham out of Diana Larkes during the last fortnight, stiff, starch and unpossessing of feature, but diligent to fashion the inevitable as decent and improved as could be. So, regarding her as irrevocably the bride of Mr. Graham, she had come to take a vital interest in the proper development of this person. The good housekeeper had hurried in advance of the party, to make possible the adequate reception at the house and smooth over in a way the impracticability of attending at two ends at once. Walter, a big boy now, one must consider, was happily not on her mind any more but was apprenticed to an engraver, having shown much talent for design and delineation.

Arrived at the parsons dwelling, who should be waiting for the party in the parlor but Maud, actually Maud, escaped from all restraint to follow the biddings of her affectionate little heart.

She threw her arms round Allans neck and kissed him on both cheeks, exclaiming: „I wanted to see you on your wedding-day, brother dear, though I couldn't come

to the church." Then she repeated the former performance with Diana, and musing a moment on the difficulties of making in delicacy some like address to her, she said: "Martha's breakfast is spread, come, let's proceed to it at once, I have just done the finishing to it, thinking you must arrive presently."

Martha, who presided at the table upon this extraordinary occasion, had the satisfaction of seeing her kind exertions done honest justice to. Maud certainly was an important improvement upon the feast in as much as she would not allow the spirits to relax and revert to the several circumstances which made this wedding so strange. Diana was not particularly talkative, but rather thoughtful, and her musing eye very frequently caught the little gold-ring on her right hand. Maud was rather pleased with her appearance, she loved her voice, that seductive voice of yore. Diana's sister-in-law mentioned the fine sun at nine o'clock of course. What a dear thing the sun was to come out express for Allans wedding. There was but one thing about it, which suffered the severest disapprobation of good Martha: the day was a Friday, and according to incontrovertible traditions marriages on Fridays were doomed to dire mischief.

Mrs. Adams was not superstitious. She told Martha now that the sunshine ought to outweigh the Friday. Then she asked Diana: "Have you a belief about the Friday being unlucky?"

"No," replied the bride, "I have no beliefs. I believe in Mr. Grahams word for the rest of that."

Maud clapped her hands for joy at this declaration. "You're right," she cried, "rely on him like a good tractable wife."

The breakfast over, the young couple took leave of the friends at Mr. Clares to repair to their own lodgings. These were yet of a provisional character, provided the

hastiness of the respective arrangements, consisting of two furnished upper-floor rooms, pointed out by Mr. Moffat as suitable for a beginning. They had the permission to use a lumber-depository in the garret attached to them, which was agreeably suggestive of a gradual acquisition of household purchases for a more convenient home. Martha was coming over to Dianas in the course of the day, as Allan would give a few hours to business at Mr. Kenyons still, leaving at twelve. The young pair was in the new parlor, when a knock came on the door, and an apple-cheeked servant-maid entered, her face hidden like a fairys between flowers, drooping from too flowersticks she bore. "From Mrs. Adams, sir, flowers to put in the windows, ma'am," explained the fairy and withdrew.

"This sister of yours is better than the other one, isn't she?" remarked Diana, bending over the carnations, which had been deposited upon the table.

"Better than the other one, than Ethel?" cried Allan.

"Oh no, Ethel is a very dear, dear sister do me."

Soon it was time for him to take his momentary leave. Diana accompanied him down-stairs to the house-door. "Good, bye, Diana," said the young husband, "I shall be back at six. Pass the day as pleasantly, as you can, with Martha and those things up-stairs." Those things being many little knick-knacks sought together by the kind woman-folks to make a little stock of ornamental and valuable household-property, including some books a bible of course from the clerical connexions. "All right, sir," replied Diana to her husbands injunctions.

"You must accustom yourself to call me Allan now," smiled he gently. Walking down the street a short way he stopped and looked back. There stood his bride still, looking after him, so lonely and unfestively on her weddingleday that it touched him. He came up to her again, put his arms around her and said "Good bye" once more.

But Diana wound herself from his caress and warding him off with her hands said: „Don't, Allan, I'm so very wicked."

In the evening Allan found her altered in her frame of mind, her fitful temper inclined to liveliness. She had plucked one of the carnations from the flowerpots and fastened it in her hair. She was so changed from her ordinary cool but not boisterous demeanor, that it almost seemed as if her frivolousness were intentional. Many were the times that she hurt Allan that evening, he especially yearning towards her with tenderness on this singular occasion. She showed him how far she was from being what he hoped to make his wife. There seemed no docility in her, no softness on this night of all others.

„Now I am Richards sister-in-law," Diana cried in one of her fits of gaiety, with a wild exulting pleasure in her tone.

„You know, Diana, that I have begged you never to mention Mr. Lansdale in any especial manner" answered Allan gravely.

„Oh no, but he belongs to my family now" said Diana with a crafty look in her eyes.

The conversation was interrupted by a visitor. Mr. Moffats hasty hand opened the door and his weird face radiated upon the pair.

„Come", he said, „will you pass the evening with me? Allan has often honored my modest entertainment and I hope you will, Diana. I have told my landlady to give us a good tea. Trust to a friend to distinguish your wedding day as best he can."

They went together to the musicians cave. The vivacious Alexander showed the bride all it contained and all it lacked, improving her views if she took notice of the hidden lessons. This however was no purposed design of Mr. Moffats. He had only very judiciously relieved the rather quaint tête-a-tête of this young couple. Naturally he resorted to his faithful violin in the end.

Having given them a deep-felt and glowing performance, he was disconcerted by the brides demanding of him: „Play something merry, Mr. Moffat, can't you play something merry?”

„Something merry?” said Mr. Moffat inquiringly in reply and laid down his violin beside him; „the light tunes are never my style, and on this night particularly I could not disenchant my violin with them. This is a great day,” he suddenly broke out of his ruminations, „a great day for us and one of serious, elevated thoughts. Diana, this is no occasion for merrymaking, but of conceiving sacred resolves and offering vows to the Maker of our lives. That's what my instrument has been saying and you won't listen?”

„I have listened,” said Diana, „but now I want to be gay. Sometimes one likes grave things and sometimes one likes gay things, Mr. Moffat.”

But that gentleman shook his head and looked at Allan. „I can't be complaisant to her,” he said with a sigh. Then getting a new impulse suddenly he addressed Diana: „I have done a fathers office for you to-day, Diana, let me stand in a fathers place towards you always.

It's not my obligation to obey your fancies, but you must be sure of my always meaning good, as a parent is sometimes chilled by a deed but not chilled towards the person of a child. We, who belong to Allan, we are serious people and not gay though joyful upon occasion. Enter into the spirit of this, my dear, as his wife.” He verily spoke in a gentle, fatherly manner, different from his accustomed quickness and irregularity of behavior, which expressed the intensity of his emotions regarding the rare step taken by his young friend. But Diana was not accessible to foreign counsel or influence that night. Allans warmer sentiments froze in his bosom, as though his bride had shown herself under a novel aspect during the eventful hours that were closing, in a new phase of

character, which he had not been prepared for, notwithstanding his acquaintance with her.

Diana had not offended him wilfully or evinced any discouraging instance about her personal feelings towards him—she had only been so gay, so very designedly bent upon merriment. This was worse than many another casual fault he could have found with her.

As Allan and Diana walked home from their kind entertainers the former asked: „What do you think of Mr. Moffat, Diana, are you disposed to like him?“

„I like him vastly. I like him for his music and without his music. You have some amiable friends — ahem, Allan.“

„You don't deny then that he made us pass an agreeable evening.“

„Oh no. You mean because of his not being merrier? I was not merry either.“ With this she stopped abruptly and fell into a dead silence. She was not yet accustomed enough to divulge her inner thoughts to any one, she who had been so long the sole and cautious warden of her own interests. Allan did not advance farther in the confidence of his wife for the present.

Chapter X.

Hostilities.

„Better, infinitely better than politeness is truth“ cried Ethel Lansdale, having risen from her chair in the excitement of a dialogue with Miss Ansted, and standing now with her hand upon the back of it — „if you are shocked by the communication received in your letter from Mrs. Lloyd Graham, say so plainly. You are entirely at liberty to entertain whatever feelings you will towards me and

mine, but your covert insinuations are somewhat more insufferable than an open avowel of your sentiments could be. If I have to respect my husbands aunt in you, let us do honor to our relations by being candid."

„What candor do you desire, Mrs. Lansdale? We have no confidences to exchange, it appears. I have called upon you after your return from Liverpool, as I intended to call upon you on the day when an unexpected accident had occasioned your departure, in attention to your being my nephews wife. I have no idea of being parted from my ward Richard because of the accretion of new influences near him. Your being my nephews wife is an accomplished fact. You desire no services from me, though I might have been found disposed to tender them — I desire no friendly sentiments from you, therefore let us associate like that vast number of ladies who have the misfortune to meet in society, led by their different objects and pleasure.”

„This is approaching clearer to the point at least. You deem it a misfortune to meet me, which you feel obliged to undergo in consideration of your attachment to Mr. Lansdale — —”

„Yes, I deem it a misfortune, Mrs. Lansdale. I feel a satisfaction in declaring it openly at your request, on the day that I have heard of the final blemish cast upon a family already more than sufficiently allied to ours before the period of your brothers disgrace. My nephews subsequent delusion is well rewarded now by Mr. Grahams revealment of himself.”

„Revealment of himself, Miss Ansted?”

„The proof he gives of linking himself by his own taste to disreputable, to really inconceivable ranges of society. The eccentricities in your family really go a little too far, I wonder that you have not stayed over yesterday in Liverpool, to attend Mr. Grahams wedding, ma chère nièce.”

„I shall see my brother after his marriage, Miss Ansted.”

Something akin to a contortion passed over the austere features of Richards aunt. „It is very pleasant for me to hear, that you purpose to maintain a lively intercourse in the circles adorned by Diana Larkes, is it not Diana Larkes?”

„I did not say a lively intercourse, with your permission. In deference to my husbands taste alone it would not be lively, you may divine.”

„I am at a loss to divine anything, when Mr. Lansdale forbears to exert his authority to hold asunder and apart two social fractions which are so absolutely dissimilate, so horizontally opposed to each other, let me say, as our accredited house of Coketown and those branches of your family who have declared the bankruptcy of their natural position within a company of our standard.”

„Miss Ansted, it has been your consequential rule of conduct since I occupy my present place, to indicate to my perceptions that you considered me an inconvenient choice of Mr. Lansdales. Your antipathy has sometimes led you farther in your demonstrations than was compatible with the regard due between persons of equality in social titles. We have preserved the mask of courtesy nevertheless. You seem to consider the news relating to my brother Allam as a point of decision —”

„The alliance with pickpockets is a point of decision, I venture to say.”

„You are exceedingly well informed about my sister-in-law.”

„I believe her name has been mentioned once or twice on former occasions,” Miss Ansted rejoined with slight signs of confusion. „I remember her name at all events, her fathers name.”

„Very well, and if ever my brother Allam has incurred disgrace, my dear lady, he effaces it by the virtuous

heroism of espousing that mans daughter, that girl, who may not be worthy the exalted sacrifice that is made for her."

"Let us not enter into these problems, but drop the subject. You will of course persist to sing the praise of your paragon brother and I must naturally decline to see in his acts anything but the lamentable craziness of a mind crushed and lowered by past disasters. We can make a polite convention, Mrs. Lansdale, we will accept it as a case of insanity, which does not reckon within the community of sound persons, and which you have your sympathies engaged in and I have not."

"No," replied Ethel proudly, "we shall not settle the point thus." She went from the place she had hitherto kept, to the table, which was strewn with papers and several small objects. Taking the topmost leaf from the number of documents and envelopes, she returned to her visitors side and said: "There is not more lamentable insanity in doing a thing by whole than in doing it by halves, I judge. Read this, if you please, Miss Ansted."

It was a small bit of a communication, neither in style nor in form worthy of the denomination of letter or note. Not from a fashionable pen, at all events, though neatly written. It ran as follows:

"Madam. If you will be so kind I beg of you to deliver over to your husband the enclosed ring, which he gave me in token of promise of marriage before he jilted me for fear of his family. I don't require it any more as I am going to be married to Mr. Graham this morning. Whoever likes his lock of hair which I also add, is welcome to it. Miss Ansted perhaps. I address this to you because I don't like to confer with gentlemen I mean like Richard. Yours

your future sister-in-law D. Larkes.

"What a piece of coarse effrontery" cried Richards aunt.
"Indeed, it is, and ought to have been burned at once,

if it were not required to match a piece of finer effrontery, Miss Ansted."

"In a fine instance you are exposing your loveable sister-in-law."

"What matters it?" retorted the angered lady of the Lansdale house. "Diana Larkes has become my sister-in-law to be improved, and a more easy task do I presume this to be than to soften hearts closed to justice and the warmth of fellow-feeling. You see now, Miss Ansted, that your nephew and my brother stand entirely parallel in their relations to this same Diana Larkes. For it rather looks like my having no reason to doubt the expositions contained in this note."

"No, don't doubt of a young man's folly, Mrs. Lansdale. Don't doubt that at the time he retracted his first engagement with you, some flaunting charms of that person had beset him and engendered in him the very common and oft-repeated farce of youthful love."

"Yes and that of swearing vows and breaking them."

"It ill becomes you as Mr. Lansdale's wife to make mountains out of molehills in this affair, my good niece. This is a strange tactic, believe me. I managed the subject far otherwise, Mrs. Lansdale. A disgusting old hag had volunteered to make me acquainted with this preposterous amour five years ago — Richard was in the age to sow his wild oats then. Learning from her that the flirtation concerned a girl of more than ordinary inappropriateness, the companion of thieves and tramps indeed, I would not believe in this instance of bad taste in my highly cultivated nephew. But the old beggar wanted to draw money and drove her point. Of course I did not want Richards father to participate in the affair. The old sinners cunning found that out as quick as anything. 'I'll speak to Mr. Lansdale,' she said as I dismissed her. I loved Richard and knew of what errors young men are

capable. I loved him, I love him always, a thousand times better than you do, Mrs. Lansdale. I humbled myself to make terms with this woman, for his sake. I did not know how far the affair might have gone. Michael Lansdale is a stern father where honor is concerned. I wrote a short letter, referring to Mrs. Rutherbys tale, to Richard and waited to judge of the facts by his answer. It came, Laconic and in few words. There was nothing to apprehend from the intelligence I had received from that wretched interloper. There was truth in it, yes, or my nephew would have evinced indignation at the terms in which I had carefully taxed him with this alleged madness of his. But he assured me that I had no cause to disquiet myself: 'no intention of entering into a disreputable marriage exists' — those were his words. As a wise woman I asked no more. It was a very simple affair, very simply done. Not worth many words indeed."

"Yes, very simply done, if you mean this by way of eulogy."

"I mean it as an instance of better knowledge of the world than you seem disposed to show. If jealousy —"

"Miss Ansted, you will do me the justice not to mention jealousy in this case. Under prevailing circumstances the word has absolutely no reason to be pronounced. Go on if you please."

"Perhaps I have saved Richard from some fatal folly, perhaps not even so much. But he has resented my interference and married you to spite me."

"Thank you, Miss Ansted."

"For my frankness? I will be frank for this once. He knew that to see him contract a distinguished alliance was the pet scheme of my affectionate ambition, that to him I looked to bring to bloom the rising fortunes of his family. He is eminently qualified for it, by nature, by inheritance and let me add, by the fond guidance I

have given him from his earliest years, as his mother was unfortunately incapable to attend to the development of his abilities. I have literally been his mother, Mrs. Lansdale. But my claims to the right of a mother could be scorned. A mothers opinion is at least listened to, mine was designedly defied. Although you are so haughty, Mrs. Lansdale, you may understand that I have not protected Richard from a most horrible liaison, to preserve him for a marriage, which could scarcely supply more credit to the family. He likes to show his will and showed it in my teeth. You will perhaps excuse my antipathy to you, my dear lady, when you consider that my nephew did not espouse you for any passion of his, for any independent reason, but simply for the sake of his self-will and a capricious code of principle in which it has ever pleased him to oppose my views and counsels."

"I have listened with interest to your explanation, Miss Ansted, but at the end allow me to express my wonder that you still feel induced to frequent a house whose mistress is so contrary to your taste."

"Because I will not concede you the power to step between me and my nephew," responded Miss Ansted, rising. "Before a lady better suited to my notions of a Mrs. Richard Lansdale, I would have ceded, but not to you. I shall seek an interview with my nephew presently, as our discussion has reached a point to-day where mediation is required."

"I shall speak to my husband also," replied Ethel, bowing her visitor out of the drawing-room.

When Richard came home in the evening, he remarked almost immediately: "Aunt Helen has been here, Ethel, has she not?"

"She has, and her disinclination towards me has assumed such a form that it were preferable she would not honor me with her calls any more. If your aunt does not regard

our relations herself in that light, I must request you to indicate this to her."

"My dear, how very disappointing that you two cannot uphold some compromise for the sake of family peace."

"And a pity that Miss Ansted will not remember what consideration she owes a lady and her nephews wife."

"Be assured that I do all I can to counteract her short-sighted prejudices. I do so much prefer to see people on a generally amicable footing, instead of allowing the growth of squabbles which are the nuisance of social intercourse."

"As these prejudices of Miss Ansteds are the same which you have yourself advanced, you may perhaps imagine how they are not easily resigned by one who naturally cares less than you to arrive at an understanding with me. I am not astonished any more at the attitude she assumes, I simply affirm that her hostile declarations have arrived at a point which obliges me to refuse to receive her in my house."

"This is strongly spoken and I defer to your excellent judgment, Ethel, not to have proceeded to these terms without compelling reason. You know that it was my sedulous aim and desire to avoid disturbances of consequence and magnitude in the interest of all parties, as Miss Ansted, over and above some personal considerations is a member of my fathers household. But no one shall offend us with impunity, if my aunt dares to outrage my wife I will write to her or speak to her to draw her to account. She must tender excuses, Ethel. You were once at a bad pass already, she must submit this time again."

"I decline to see her in my house, Richard."

"Leave it to me to assert you. Do you think I am more indifferent about the rights of my wife than you are of your own? Will I not look to your getting the attention that corresponds you?"

„I have told you my decision.”

„Which does not consult my wishes. I am more anxious even than you can be to vindicate you against any one who attempts to underrate you. Trust me in that. I shall act as becomes the master of the house.”

„This a question which more concerns its mistress. Bear in mind my declaration, if you please. Now, Richard, let us pass to something else. This message have I received this morning to deliver over to you.”

She quietly handed him Dianas writing, holding in her hand the ring wrapped in a bit of paper.

Richard quickly perceived the drift of this communication. Not very advantageously prepared for it by the preceding conversation the rash anger flushed unto his temples when he discerned the import of the present subject. He looked at Ethel when he had finished the perusal of the note. He left it to her to speak first.

„I am sorry,” said Ethel, „that you did not marry Diana Larkes.”

„Don't jest with me, Ethel.”

„I pronounce the pure, candid thruth. I do regret it. Do not take it for a taunt. My brother has married her, you might have done so. I would rather not be your wife under existing circumstances, Richard, but honor you as I do Diana Grahams husband.”

„Ethel! Beware.”

„Of what? Do you believe that all my old feelings could remain unshaken after you have so disabused me of my ideas about you as you did in these latter days? Rather than receive this denunciation from yon misled creature, I would wish you to have done that for love of her what Allan does for charity.”

„You wish me to have espoused a low, dishonest, flirting outcast, a residue from the gutter, Mrs. Lansdale?”

„After having promised to do so, yes.”

„Did you hear me promise to do so?”

„I accept the verisimilitudes of the case, after what I see here and what Miss Ansted has mentioned.”

„Miss Ansted! So you have gone the length of such confidences with her! No wonder that you fell out. Ethel don't make accusations precipitately upon grounds into which you have no intimate insight. You evidently have no conception what a common, abandoned person this Diana Larkes is, how absolutely unfit to be a gentlemans wife and you do not try to imagine how things came about during my passing infatuation, which I do not deny.”

„You did not leave her for any of these reasons, but because Miss Ansted warned you.”

„She helped to remind me of myself, though I reflected of my own accord already at the time. The girl had deceived me about her degree in society, she was a crafty spirit, I had detected her upon the doorstep of your mothers house, Ethel, and still she pleaded to retain my good-will. I did something for her yet, as she protested her innocence. I had loved her, Ethel, it was a mistake, it is no offence to you to avow it, I had loved her, that beauty of hers had bewitched me, and I had pity on her. My confidence was lost after my discovery, but I could not consent yet to tear myself away, I wavered irresolutely. And she needed my services so much at that period. Mark that, I always rested on her protestations of innocence, I did not dream of taking a corrupted woman to my bosom, like your brother. Besides I, in my position, can venture more, if I like to, than Mr. Graham. I stand in an unassailable position, and can afford to brave diverse doubts about my consort. Your brother seals the regard he is furthermore to be held in by the choice of his partner. I pondered on the course I was to take, I tell you, when my aunts inquiry arrived. The business

was up then. Nothing but a prompt denial could be the answer to her note considering the obligations which my fathers son has to take into account."

„What obligations?"

„Not to oppose my father in his plans for my future."

„It was very unwise then to have given a promise of marriage, this engagement-ring, Richard, to Diana Larkes. And not to tell her at once, upon the force of your detection of her station, that you retracted it."

„You are very acute, Ethel, you only want to ascertain until what point I have loved that farcical creature. She was a consummate actress. Such people have a knack of fettering the unwary. That shock of aunt Helens admonition brought me to reason. I could not marry the girl openly, and I could not marry her clandestinely now. Reason got the better of love and all the illusions of my love were suddenly put to flight like vapors before the light of sun. I saw Diana as she was, as I have afterwards found it corroborated that she is. A cunning designing vixen, the scion of impure haunts who was only practising a finer art of pickpocketing upon me. I saw her, obnoxious and clinging, to be cast off with the more despatch the better."

„All this you saw upon Miss Ansteds letter holding before you the peril of division with your father, of disinheriting of his wealth. That was the light that shone upon the scruples of your love. That was what made you cast her off in frightened, inconsiderate haste, so that Diana Larkes had one valid ground of reproach against you, as it does seem to me she has."

„If I dealt with her contemptuously it was because I held her to be and because she is despicable."

„What rapid reverisons of feeling! You loved her up to the receipt of Miss Ansteds letter."

„I was infatuated still, yes. As infatuation is a state

unsubstantial and unreal, thus it vanishes at an effectual collision. My belief in sincerity has always been strong, so that I remained long without being undeceived. I was true to sincerity still when some indices about Diana, when one stroke finally shook my faith in her. But these are stale, very stale matters," Richard suddenly interrupted himself. "And it was decisive enough in itself when the loss of my fortune was put into the scale."

"Oh I suppose so."

"Don't speak contemptuously, Ethel. I am no adorer of the Golden Calf, you must know that. But my fortune is the basis of all my ambitions, all my plans. All my glowing dreams about the furtherance of my fellow-beings, my projects for the aid of education, industry, philanthropy in a word, are founded on the supposition of handsome means to support and abet them. My fortune has long since been dedicated in my mind to purposes which, I say so without presumption, are not ignoble."

"If you had loved and pitied that girl and taken your hand from her for the consideration of this fortune, no blessing would have been upon the ends you name, it having been saved on this condition."

"She was not worth the sacrifice at all events. Don't you see that my fortune was the very thing she wanted?"

"I don't see it plainly, remembering that she is Allans wife now. Your propositions are only excuses. Diana has some ground of complaint against you, you have not fulfilled the part of a man of honor. You have loved her without principle and given her up without principle. You must have fancied her much to dare your father all along. But for the apprehension about your prospects, you might have married her notwithstanding." She paused and then proceeded: You do not protest against this assumption. I take it for granted then."

"Ethel, there is not the least use in trying to sift the

follies which one might have committed. I believe I would not have been guilty of this, but I cannot tell as I was a little unsound at that time."

"You might have done the work Allan is going to do now."

"In a like poor, narrow sphere?"

"Oh, don't speak of that. What resources were always yours to become great enough yet with but a little more effort than you exert under prevailing circumstances. Mr. Rosen in his unrelaxing gratefulness would have promoted you high, Richard. You might have given Miss Ansted a manlier answer than to deny an engagement which did exist. Which did exist, Richard, be the girl what she would."

"You seem to dwell with pleasure on these visions, my dear."

"I dwell on them with the pang of some stipulations that are missing."

"Now my patience is exhausted, Ethel. I have not expected to obtain a scolding, fault-finding wife in you. Every married man has his past, and if he is a gentleman of honor, that past has no reason to interfere with his present. I won't hear from you, Mrs. Lansdale, that I have not acted as a man of honor. You have acted very inappropriately to draw subjects concerning your husband into the conversations with Miss Ansted, with whom you can't agree. This note, which I shall retain, my dear, ought to serve as a proof to you about what kind of a person we have quarrelled. Meet Diana Larkes or Diana Graham and judge for yourself what description of treatment she deserves."

"I need not do that, Richard, the behavior that becomes a gentleman does not alter from the figures put in juxtaposition to it."

"Go on, Ethel, if you please, go on."

"Your language is that of a heartless man, of a selfish

one, who has regarded love as a pleasure without accepting its duties. You have given Diana Larkes a promise of marriage, which has legal validity and cared little about it because her inferior position probably excluded her from giving it that validity. This subject has the sting for me that it puts you in the wrong once more and worse, that you are indifferent about being in the wrong. With that I have explained to you why I truly would prefer to stand by and see you the husband of the writer of this note."

"Thank you for a moral sermon," cried Richard with wrathful hilarity. "Make a martyr of me for vicious women and too virtuous women to peck at. Hear any ones opinion besides that of your overstrained brother and his admirers and see if they won't tell you that this tormenting about a worthless impostor is ridiculous. Be content that you never had a more equal rival than this." Pronouncing which sentiment Richard Lansdale caused the moral sermon to end by dint of abandoning the contest and the room.

Chapter XI.

The Letter from Coketown.

Ethels large-minded and magnanimous spouse must be owned to have been in a fit of fury when he left his lady to herself. This was surely not what he had expected, when he demanded the latters hand in Mrs. Grahams modest parlor. Reproaches and exhortations, lessons and assertions? Had his ideal of a wife not been the trusting, unquestioning devotion, the admiring reliance, the obedient emulation of sweet, yielding women? Yet this description of female character sometimes has a silly, inane, unintelli-

gent side, a want of the higher powers of the fair sex. Therefore Richard selected Ethel Graham. Apparently she possessed not at all the attributes just enumerated, but her sagacious suitor had hoped great things from the gentle subjugation to be exercised by a sense of gratitude towards him and a perception of the noble work he was operating upon her fate. For a pity these assumed qualities were not forthcoming from the beginning, instead of that Ethel by degrees came to raise inquisitions into the perfection of his own lofty, unblameable character, and his unobjectionable, supreme discretion.

It was a real insult to throw in the face of Richard a regret that he had not effectuated the marriage with lovely Diana, which he once did propose. The sentiments of humanity frequently are so unstable yet, that after the lapse of not too many years one feels as if one never had experienced them. They were thrown off and forgotten. Richard rather triumphed than otherwise, I believe, in Dianas perversity, as this seemed to give him full justification and ample right to have proceeded as he did. The more perverse the better to kick her away like a dog. He would gather instances of her commonness if any opportunity offered to cast them as dust in the face of her champions, be it his own conscience or a voice from without. The specific, the intrinsic worth of Mr. Lansdales philanthropy, gentlemen.

As to the love which Thomas Larkes daughter had once kindled, when did it die? That girl had obtained a powerful hold upon her followers fancy. She had melted his anger when he had discovered her origin. To forgive in words before a pair of beseeching eyes is easier done than to do the same in actions, to document the forgiveness, to speak plainly, by a marriage-license. Probably the most convenient dissolution of his wonderful courtship was rather a hard nut to crack for lazy, good-natured Richard.

It was to his taste to be Dianas protector, it was inevitable to be her lover in her presence. In this puzzle he kept out of her presence to consider. Miss Ansteds admonition arrived. The uncertainties were solved. He had to eschew Dianas presence for evermore. Should he help her yet, was her distressed position clamouring upon him? She ought to know sundry means to eke out her existence. Not give her too much money, though the young mans generosity would readily have granted her that, because she might use it against him. He was not sure if she could, but while deliberating about that it was best to be prudent. Your honorable, rich, benevolent gentlemen sometimes are so very calculatingly prudent.

As Richard had loved Diana and put some store by her in his thoughts and made a feature of her in his life, yet never allied her to himself in the sight of the world, it was agreeable now to interpret her as the meanest of flirts. This kind of love which rises and sinks with the sparklings of eyes and the cadence of voice, which becomes hateful when it stumbles against some substantial interest and on the whole has no resources superior to a continual outward attractive, this kind of love is an intoxication. It may be heavier or lighter to shake off, but one wakes from it at some hour with a sick headache and confounds the spirits and fumes. Richard knew ever since, of course, that he had been drugged, and one does not like to have such a subject dilated on afterwards.

So, everything considered, he was beside himself with resentment and vexation. It was more than he could put into words. He gnawed at it all the evening, in irritation with his wife, with Diana, with Allan — with himself perhaps that he could not assert himself more. In the morning he rose with his disappointment and his injured, perfection, and his disgust of some passages restrained in his mind gnawing at him still. Then he went to his desk,

fumbled out the note Ethel had yesterday received, laid it before him, dipped his pen into the ink and indited upon a sheet of fine writing-paper the following expression of his sentiments, addressed to Allan Graham:

„Sir. The note which I hereby enclose was received, yesterday by my wife. It seems to me that Mrs. Allan Graham acted under very mistaken views when she sent it to this address. As it is no wonder perhaps that she should be strange to polite usages I wish to call your attention to the inadequateness of the steps it may occur to your wife to take. Possibly you will dissuade her from attempts to sow discord between husband and wife. I beg to rectify, that my engagement with Miss Larkes was not dissolved for any interference from other parties but that it never existed under the condition of my knowing Diana Larkes in her real character. Please to send back the adjoined note, which belongs to Mrs. Richard Lansdale, instead of reply.

I am, sir

Yours etc.

Richard Lansdale.

On the evening of the same day, when Allan came home from his work this epistle was delivered to him by Diana herself. She did not know that a communication of this kind from Coketown appeared strange to her husband, nor was she over well acquainted with her ex-lovers handwriting. Allan opened the envelope. Having read the contents he looked at his wife, turning to her slowly and sorrowfully:

„Oh Diana, what have you done!“

Mrs. Allan stopped in her occupation and observing that her deed was so promptly coming to light, asked rather insolently of her husband: „What have I done?“ by way of defensive against impeachment.

„You have wilfully made my sister Ethel acquainted with your previous engagement with Mr. Lansdale. I have

implored you, reminded you, warned you to let that past affair be dead from henceforth among us three who knew of it. Did I not say to you it is a matter of course not to mention a subject that could only cause grievance in our family, now that you belong to it yourself? And did you not assent frankly and spontaneously?"

"I said yes, yes, of course. I have often been obliged to say yes, yes, of course, but do you think that I always could mean it? Not I."

"What satisfaction was there in this for you to do it?"

"I've done it because I hate both Mr. and Mrs. Lansdale. I wanted to put them against each other. That's easier than to get at them singly."

"This is a work then done for the ends of hate and by the aid of falsehood." Allan heaved a heavy sigh.

"I hate Mrs. Lansdale because she is haughty and Mr. Lansdale for a conceited cheat. I suppose they'll have had a little quarrel about my letter," mused Diana, mentally smacking her lips.

"Diana, if you had only told me plainly that you did not intend to accede to my wish. If you were not kindly disposed towards Mrs. Lansdale for my sake, had you but been loyal to truth and let me know your mind."

Diana smiled; tell him the truth in the face of a purpose which he would counteract, the defiant truth when she was not Mrs. Allan Graham yetwhat innocence of proposition, indeed!

"Then there is no reliance upon you any more, if your words do not imply what you mean, your promises are fallacious, your asseverations are hollow, you do not even depart from them, you do not believe in them while you utter them."

"What can you expect from me," cried Diana. "I never spoke in the sense of honor, I have used my words as I needed them. Don't hold up your hands at me, I have

not been bred in your customes, don't think that I'll be governed by you because you are so virtuous and righteous. I love you, Allan, but I won't be governed by you."

"Nor shall you, only speak the truth."

"And only don't offend Ethel Lansdale, and only do this and to that. I do bear your sister a grudge. Now look here, if I didn't esteem you and honor you and trust you, more than I ever did any mortal, I would not have sent that letter and resigned that ring as Diana Larkes. That's a compliment to you, sir. But for Mrs. Lansdale its a sample what her fine, honorable equals are, and for Miss Ansted, if she'll do me the favor to hand over to her that wisp of hair, it's a remembrance from me."

"You must not indulge that vindictive temperament," Allan began persuasively.

"Oh no. No." Short anh snappishly, not very encouragingly in fact.

"You say that you trust me. If you don't stand firm by the truth, how am I to trust you? Truth is the beginning, the principal virtue of all understanding."

"I've learned well enough that truth doesn't serve always."

"You are taken out of the circumstances in which you learnt these principles and were fain to act upon them. You are now removed into a sphere where people love each other, care for each others feelings and do not blindly obey necessity and temptation, but the laws of the Almighty. I have removed you from your old life, to introduce you into a new one, entirely new to you in the position it offers, the duties it demands and the aspirations it cherishes."

"Oh you want to be thanked for that, I suppose," rejoined Diana with mean evasion. "I know that I'm changed in my position and I'll bear its dignity in mind. I'm

taking care to be no discredit to you and you'll see by and by in which parts you may trust me. Come to the window now, Allan, look at the people opposite, what nice curtains they have got. Think of the time when we'll have such. I talked with Mrs. Jeffries' maid to-day and — —"

Allan had found out by this time that Diana was lightly waving their previous subject. Such a dejection, such a desperation of spirits came over him after some more words with his wayward wife that he felt impelled by his rising temper to go out for a short walk and cool in solitude. His sensibilities for the cabal offered to his dearest sister, formed no insignificant part of his resentment. He went the length of a few streets, and in continuation knocked at Alexander Moffats door.

"Oh, it's you, my boy," cried that gentleman; seeing his visitor entering.

"Play me a melody of your violin," petitioned Allan as he sat down on a chair, bending forward and looking moodily on the floor.

Mr. Moffat complied, giving him a long, pathetic piece. When he had put by his instrument he said to his listener: "Allan, something is the matter with you. You have had a trouble just now, before you came here."

Allan confided his affliction to his nearest of friends. "Diana has informed Ethel of Richard Lansdales anterior desertion of herself. She has done it out of pure ill-will —" and crowning pang of all: "How shall I have faith in her upon these conditions? Where is my hold upon her when she sets faith at naught?"

"I have not concealed from her how I cherish Ethel, I have let her recognize it repeatedly, when we touched upon Dianas preconceived averseness towards her. I hoped to have gained her respect so far, that I might soften any revengeful sentiments she might entertain. My task seemed

scarcely opposed by the direction of her interest. And she only deceived me to hit behind my back, to launch an additional disturbance into Ethel's home, to defy such a natural endeavor as mine. I have not warmed her heart with one spark of regard or compunction."

Mr. Moffat strode up and down the narrow apartment, hearkening unto Allan's disconsolate observations. When Allan ceased to speak he stood with both his arms against the wall and his head leant upon them. He remained in this attitude for a considerable while, so long, that his young friend rose and touched him on the shoulder. As he looked up upon that, Allan saw that he had been weeping all the time. With manly impatience he broke through the last tears now, ejaculating: "Oh if the two dearest children of Alice Graham were destined to be unhappy! Those she has longest cared for, whom she has most sadly and anxiously resigned from her roof. What a bad trait is this of Dianas! Though all her feelings had grown savage, should she not love you and should she not be tamed out of that love? Now one is hurting the other for the mere ferocious pleasure of it, let her have done all unprincipled things to gain her poor, wretched subsistence, but now, when all has changed, when you preserve her, now — —!"

"She cannot alter so quickly, Mr. Moffat, all her reasoning has been crooked and contorted under the pressure of her adverse fate."

"No, no, this is a great baseness, a great wickedness, she has no gratefulness, no susceptibility in her. Do you remember that moment when you told me that you had resolved to make her your wife? I sprung up with joy, I slapped you on the back and cried: 'That's a remedy. That's a remedy which few would have the courage to try. God will bless you for it.' So I said, and as true as I live I thought the work was done. I thought that

pitable girl, who must have a womans heart, will wonder at what you did for her, will admire it, will adore you, will thank you with her whole, delivered soul. I imagined she ought to make a better wife than any married for another reason and owing you so much give you ineffable reward. And now she has no gratitude in her! On her very wedding-morning she works malice! When she should have made vows to be good and repay your noble sacrifice. Yes, if she could not come up with them at once in practice, we are frail in our best purposes and how much more so should it be such a poor, untutored, neglected character as that unfortunate creatures. What she shows us here is baseness, depravity of feeling, the utter annihilation of her moral intelligence."

"I hope better than that, Mr. Moffat. Cease in that strain of ideas and wait for some longer period of proofs. I must be back now, dear sir, I won't leave Diana alone so long."

Allan was eager to go, but the music-master had clasped his hand and fastened his large, nervous eyes upon his face: „Allan, if you could make nothing of Diana, if you could not improve her, draw no natural qualities out of her deadened, withered soul, if you had on the contrary placed vice upon your hearth with her, or apathy or intrigue, what would your life be, how could you bear it, how could you breathe under the burden?"

"I have not judged her quite sterile when I asked her to marry me. But if her corruption he rooted and spread beyond remedy, ah Mr. Moffat —" Allan made a momentary pause and added: „I shall be glad nevertheless to have tried all with her."

"You could bear it, you could drag that disappointment along, in all its phases, its ugly, unthought of details?" He waved his hand as if to disperse a loathsome vision. „It is horrid. I could not bear it. I could not bear to come and see it in your house, it would consume me."

„I had to consider the eventuality of defeat when I made this stake, Mr. Moffat. The sanguinity of not doing so would have been incautious."

„Yes, yes, for certain. But you performed an act which I have never known to be done in my lifetime, and according to its distinction I reckoned its success. Diana is purblind if she does not see it. Ethel has to bear a disappointment too. Richard has deceived us all. Is that letter like the man we thought him, in the old days while he was here in Liverpool? Is his treatment of Diana like him? Enamour himself of a winning face forsooth, when he is engaged to marry Miss Graham, show the fallacy of his love when his Coketown expectations totter, or when he does not know whether he loves the girl or abhors her origin. Slinks away and leaves her to become a hundred-thousand times worse than she was at that early age, without caring or disturbing himself about it, — is that like the man we made of him? And then send Ethel here with the cruelty of his disdain for you, his disdain for you, is that like a gentleman?"

„There are few gentlemen perhaps but would easily be brought to forgive him all this."

„But he is never the man we thought him, eh? This could not have happened to the man we imagined him, all this could never have happened to you, Allan. Your sister must have said good-bye to her ideals, to her former visions, to her virgin hopes. Once that such blasts have passed over them they are faded. We have judged too high, too sanguinely of human nature." Of a sudden a change came into the musicians variable temper, his features brightened up.

„How long is it, my boy, since you found Diana? Barely a fortnight, barely a fortnight, and two days since your wedding, that's not much. She needs more time, a deal of time, no doubt, poor creature. Her old habits cling

to her too close yet, I suppose, she can't cast them off, they must be worn off. She must recognize your goodness and know that she was bad. Such people know that they are bad, they are not like persons who have had advantages and don't know themselves for varnish and polish. It doesn't signify so much in her that she did a malevolent trick than it does in that developed, educated, refined gentleman, Richard Lansdale," cried Alexander Moffat, striking with his hand upon the table. „That philanthropist, that humane thinker and philosopher. No it doesn't. She has been taught to do ill and shall do better, he has been taught to do well and does worse. Never despond, Allan, your work's your work you'll see, anyhow. Anyhow." With great emphasis on the concluding condition, Mr. Moffat broke off with the inward satisfaction of having come round again to his natural point of view.

Allans spirits were also being restored by this time and he said with anything but a forced smile, pressing his honest friends hand once more: „Good bye now, dear Mr. Moffat, I must be off, back to Diana."

„Yes, back to Diana — every hour that you are with her should do her good. If some persons only comprehended the mental pictures one makes of them. They are always too favorable if one loves them, yet never too favorable if they love again. Good-night, Allan, you are my boy — I've had a hand in your fate. Others may offer up their full fervency for Ethel Lansdale, my prayers belong to you. It's me in great part who has influenced this state of things, tut, Allan, it is, and it's me who would die for grief if there were not some grand holy consolation in it. Yours is a strange fate, Ethels isn't — because a beautifying imagination is not rare in human hearts, I believe, and the responsive real inward perfectness is. Good night. May Heaven bless and shield you!"

Chapter XII.

The Excursion up the River.

Allan was putting some things in order at Mr. Kenyons, preparatory to his leaving the shop for the night. As he did so, something jingled in his pocket. Consequent upon this jingling a blush, a slight, furtive blush stole into his cheeks. That blush had once perhaps been very deep and hot, but had grown fainter with frequent repetition as all things do with usage. But still it came, alive and creeping — and why? what answer did it imply to that jingle in Mr. Grahams pocket? What silent thought did it bear up into Mr. Grahams brain?

The fact is that the jingle referred to Mrs. Allans peculiar habits, that it was the jingle of keys to private cabinets and drawers of her husbands. Diana, in the spirit of former customs still, had betrayed a proneness to incur several unforeseen expenses by aid of resorting to her husbands cash-box and chests. These discreet withdrawals came out afterwards in the shape of very gay, gaudy articles of dress, of some crockery brought to the door by a pedlar, or not in any traceable shape at all, when it might be presumed by a loving heart that she gave the domestic purloin to a beggar, as she was found out to do also. When put to task upon the subject, Diana would either deny the charge, remarking sweetly: „Don't you give me the household-money to manage and contrive with, dear? It's very little sometimes and I'm sorry you say you can't give more” — or brought to bay she would say in a tone of injured innocence: „I'm your wife, Allan, and your money is mine. Are you going to tell me that I'm pilfering in my own house, upon our joint property?”

„My dear, that money which I put by is not mine but

other peoples. It is appropriated to my outstanding responsibilities."

This was not plausible to Dianas comprehension and there remained nothing for Allan but to fasten his locks and take the keys with him for safetys sake. On the other hand, Diana was not all a vicious companion, though those were only the coarsest of her faults, which Allans generous act had directly annulled. The sense of her freshgained position was full upon her, the right which had been vouchsafed her had engendered a certain self-esteem, a certain code of dignity, of pride, of obligations. There was no fear of her ever abandoning the new ground upon which Allan had placed her, not the faintest apprehension of her being dishonest to the external world, in her dealings with tradespeople etc., so far as money was concerned, her young pride stood up against it. How she managed in her words was another question. Sometimes a secret shudder crept upon Allan, when he looked at the wife at his side and thought of the abyss of impure knowledge her head enshrined. When she talked a language strange to his transparent, honorable life, when her words showed how near the notions of sin and disonor were to her course of ideas, when she manifested herself as dwelling in a sphere far removed and far beneath her husbands habitual range of thought.

But there were moments again when Allan went to bed really happy after having spent the evening with his wife, when he lingered on hours passed with her with a smile and felt something sweeter than compassion for the young creature that belonged to him. This was mostly when Diana had received him, telling him of her days work with the healthy glow of activity adorning her lively face, and the evenings reading which he always strove to give her had yielded them mutual joy. Dianas wits were quick and her brain clear, so that Allan had exploded with zeal

the promise of improving her intellect by wellselected and diligently expounded reading. Everywhere however the wild and unbridled customs contracted in her former existence rose up as a check to his progress. Diana was vastly entertained by reading, but she would fain stop short at that. Keeping his instructive aims in view, Allan tried to lure her into improvement by books of travel and descriptions of voyages. His listener however could not bear pictures of scenery, she yawned over them. Traits of foreign custom must have something striking to tickle her fancy or she would only indifferently remark what fools those people were. Her liege professor tried history, but she was to be won over to nothing but its anecdotal part. To Allans studious, assiduous mind this cast of inclination appeared particularly frivolous and flippant. He doggedly went through "A Childs history of England" with her. But what Diana wanted, were novels. A good novel is no depreciable means of education, if authors will only be sedulous to cultivate the full privilege of their calling. Dickens was no favorite of Mrs. Allans, he approached too much a region familiar to her. It was Bulwer who attracted her, she was pleased by Miss Mullock and could just be held awake to the paintings of Scott. When her husband would grant her a novel Diana was full of delight. Allan made the round of his family borrowing books everywhere and taking the utmost pains to accumulate good, wholesome stuff. His better half had not the right sedulity of learning, she caught impressions easily like a child, but like a child too she saw no deeper rule than amusement in her pursuits. The ever re-echoing watchery for Allan was Patience! thank Heaven it was a cry of hope.

Dianas present disposition was difficult to overcome, but there was something doing always, working stealthily, imperceptibly at the several accesses to her soul.

Allans wife had one propensity among others, and that was to avoid by every possible subterfuge to stand convicted of gratitude. No doubt that she felt gratitude, but to any occurrence calling for it she responded with a peculiar impertinence and airiness which most successfully deceived the uninitiated as to her power of conceiving any tender obligation or softening remorse. To herself this imported a vindication of her independence, thwarted and prejudiced as she judged, by adverse circumstances and consequently the more entitled to be carefully asserted. In the midst of these petty prevarications a quiet, involuntary tenderness was surely gaining upon her manner, a womanly fondness was caring for Allan and disclosing itself in such little outward tokens and devices as a being will give it vent in who was not accustomed to avowals of love and by her educational station reduced to very simple means of expression.

If Dianas moral elevation was divinely purposed by this wonderful constellation in her fate, certainly things were taking a turn to make her husband obviously profit by it under the same point of view. His character, it was manifest, expanded and rose from that superior range to which he was drawing up the rescued waif while performing his noble and laborious task. No exercise for the regulation of his rash, turbulent temper could have been better than the exigencies of his present life. The disgusting vulgarity, the unfathomed lowness occasionally evidenced in Diana, the instances of habit not the less abominable, for being a thorough surprise at the moment and almost immediately cast into oblivion on purpose, put his fortearance abundantly to the test, as only she could do for being a woman and his wife.

The whole force of his will was sometimes called upon to maintain his equilibrium under the prodigious stress Diana laid upon his duty, an endurance greatest for a

man of such sensitive purity as Allan, and perhaps only to be owned by a person of such firm moral standard. And all the while this rare converter had but little consolation of evident successful result, only now and then an evening of faultlessly good behavior, and a trust cautiously but steadily increasing that he had established a hold upon his spouses affections. There was no direct teaching, no method of progress, no immediate development, only the occult, unswerving influence of constant contact with a good, high, striving character. Allan could not discern any piece of work done from day to day or from week to week, there were no great revolutions and revulsions of feelings and qualities, no evil spells dislodged by a word of release; but at the end of a year he could even look at Diana Graham and say she was somehow growing unlike the Diana Larkes he had taken home from the streets.

It had come to pass that Allan generally went home to Diana very briskly and brightly, often to be disappointed and checked in his spirits, but always again with a joyful buoyancy and expectation. His eye was glad and clear too to-day, as he turned from the door of Mr. Kenyons shop. Mr. Kenyons shop? Why, it was his own business now, the old man had retired in favor of Mr. Graham under the stipulation of a modest maintenance to be paid him by the latter, having no further aims for gain any more. Upon Allans marriage his former master had proposed the suitability of this arrangement, so the elder couple were at rest now, retaining their wonted quarters in the ancient house and the young couple with a little increased subsistence had removed to a small house of their own at the entrance of last winter.

At the time of their removing to this tenement Mrs. Lloyd Graham had taken occasion to consult with Mrs. Adams about some little attention which the former would

like to offer to their young sister-in-law. While the will and power to give any material mark of friendship was not wanting in Mrs. Lloyd, the sprightly ministers wife might be supposed to fall more easily on the appropriate form it was desired to take. One object, having the same worth in one sense, can be of much greater or inferior efficiency in another, and the nature of a present or demonstration of any kind to Diana was a thing to consider by more than superficially kind matrons like those who were putting their heads together about the tribute best to choose for the mistress of that new homestead. Maud, doing honor to her place almost immediately hit upon the proposition which was sound enough in all its supporting motives to be adopted.

“There’s a back-yard to their house,” she cried, „send her poultry, Gwen. That’ll be a capital service for her, and Allan too. I sent her flowers on the day they were married, but Diana has no perseverance to tend them. Now with hens and chickens she’d surely be better entertained. You know she makes all sorts of tricks and nonsense, when she’s left alone. Having the poultry she’ll have more amusement to keep her occupied and usefully occupied. Constantly, Gwen, mark that, it’s not like a book or anything inanimate which loses its charm by and by. Oh, this is an idea that will help Allan more than he’ll wot of’ concluded the little housewife, clapping her hands.

So the two ladies hit the right thing, which was a most real, effective service, apart from being a kindness. Diana had all along so far vindicated her nature, that she testified herself an active, bustling mistress of her modest concern, not entirely under the rule of order at first, but satisfactorily the reverse of lazy and phlegmatic. Her former indolence had undoubtedly been due to despondency and negligence under her stubborn degradation, which were

remedied by having fulfilled the conditions that alone could reclaim a sense of her human duties.

Very brightly she was looking out of the bedroom-window for Allans coming, how he knocked at the painted knocker, marking how much time it took for Fanny, their little servant-maid to hasten to the door and open it for her master. Having so far followed out the proceedings she went down and told her husband on the stairs that she was going to the kitchen. From thence she soon caused to be brought up a well-supplied tea, such as a woman loves to receive her husband with, who comes home from his work. Over the remainders of meat from dinner Mrs. Allan began to discuss the important features of the day.

„Mr. Adams was here about an hour ago, he brought me a book. There, Allan, on the mantel-shelf.”

„What sort of a book is it?”

„Life of a Missionary”. He spoke to me a great deal about serious reading and a lot besides.”

„He remained some times then?”

„Oh he made quite a long call. Gave me a number of lessons, sir.”

„What about?” Allan laughed.

„About everything in short. He told me that I ought to apply myself to what you taught me, that I ought to read my bible regularly in the morning or at any convenient time, only regularly, that I ought to forswear untruth, that I ought to pray God every evening to make me forswear untruth and such like, that I ought to go against any habits that I knew caused disagreeableness, that I ought” — her blue eyes wandered round to find the remembrance of more ‘oughts’, while the second finger of her right hand actually counted them on the fingers of the left one.

That good city-missionarys injunctions were well remembered apparently, but only, I fear, as Mrs. Allan might

have attempted to remember the counties of England, with a merely mnemonic interest.

„Oh, the best thing he said was” she suddenly cried vivaciously — „I showed him the poultry-yard, you know — he said I ought to have ducks also. But I answered him, I didn't want any more of the sort if it was to come from Mrs. Lloyds. Then he said, but I had liked the fowls —”

„Very true, and so you did, didn't you, my dear?”

„Oh yes, immensely, but I don't want people to make me presents, who don't like to come to me and talk with me. There's only Mrs. Adams who would come here oftener if she could. All the rest won't be friends, they only intend to be kind, for your sake perhaps, or for charity's sake perhaps or for any reason but their taking to me personally. I don't require charities and presents any more now that I am your wife, Ally dear, and if Mrs. Lloyd and Mrs. Richard and your mother won't take tea with me and converse with me rationally, they may keep their ducks and things to themselves.”

„Well, I think my mother would take to you dearly enough, if you would only take some pains to win her good opinion and her affection. My wife is the very person whom her heart would yearn to, Diana.”

„It never will, Allan, ladies at her age never melt towards such as me. What do I care?” she added, inspecting the tips of her fingers, as though some choice ideas were sitting upon them, one of which she was about to select.

„There's no one who would think it possible to fraternize with me but you, Allan. So closely, I mean, and not objecting to come upon a level with me. You almost love me, I believe. There's nothing but commiseration in the others, pity and compassion, pity and compassion round and round and over again. What a bore.”

By and by, feeling that her sentiments about Allan were

growing rather too tender within her, the good lady be-thought herself of striking up another tune.

„Allan, how can you bear to live in such a humdrum of a life? Now we're married more than a year and you're up and away to the shop and back in the afternoon every day, every day, to church on Sundays and at home on Sundays, always the same. Can't you manage some little diversion once? Other people are poor also, but they proportion themselves an occasional change too. You do nothing to amuse your wife. You keep me here in the house without once thinking of taking me for any pleasure or excursion. You're a close-fisted gentleman if you can't afford to spend something towards a days sport. You are leading me the life of a penitent, you are, sir?

„My dear, as regards myself you have but hit the actual case, for several years I have felt reduced to leading the life of a penitent. An untoward circumstance in my past has brought me to a position which I could have offered to no woman who was not placed rather worse yet than myself. From a richer sphere I could not have drawn down any one to be my wife. It is a life with a reproach upon it, it is a life incapable of expansion because it is hemmed in by heavy obligations. We must be poor and retiring, I told you what I had to offer you."

„I remember. But though you can't be proud for having been in prison once you needn't be dejected as if no one enjoyed himself and tossed his head afterwards. You must consider me, Mr. Graham, we are young, we can't be moping our lives out. You're heaping harm upon harm if you'll make us miserable and melancholy with your old trouble." Observing that her arguments were producing an effect the reverse of favorable, Diana fell to coaxing her husband in behalf of her newly-started proposition until he said:

„Well, well, I don't say that something of the kind can

never be done, I only told you why it had not been done hitherto."

Standing in the court-yard with his wife about a month later, having a look at the fowls before he went away in the morning, Allan said, putting his arm round her waist.

"I believe next week is your birthday, my dear."

"Wasn't the date on the paper, I had from my father?"

"Just so and I think it's next week. We'll make a little excursion up the river on the next Saturday afternoon perhaps, in honor of the festive occasion, Di, would you like that?"

"Wouldn't I, Allan," burst out the young creature with such a rush of joy that it quite startled her husband, hugging him somewhat roughly but fervently along with her candid thanks.

"If the April-weather does not get better than this it may not be practicable, of course."

"You'll do it a week or two later then."

The first Saturday-afternoon pointed out however, proved just an exception of that springs murky weather and Allan stepped on the steamboat with his wife down by the landing-stage, bound for Eastham. A ruddy sun was twinkling on the Mersey and many people were taking advantage of the exceptionally fine day to throng the conveyances to a free-air resort. Diana was in high glee about the bustle on board and about a nice seat they got in the midst of a group of very dashing excursionists. She looked rather arrogant herself in the best finery she could make ready for the day, so spruce indeed, that there might be one stranger or another who would tax Allan with having married his wife for her prettiness. The sallow color and the meagre contours which had so much impaired her appearance some time ago, were gradually being replaced by health and freshness, the negligence engendered by the illness subsequent to her wound and the coarseness she

had abandoned herself to during the lowermost stages of her late career were retreating from her features under the new impressions she was in course of accepting. Her lovely hair was again made to adorn her and from the side where her scar was not seen her profile was again that of a moderate little witch. Indeed Mrs. Allan glanced round their fellow-passengers with the curiosity of finding out whether she still attracted a stray look or so, turning to Allan afterwards with a peculiar smile and confidence as though she said under her breath: „You're smitten, gentlemen, are you not? — and this is my husband, by your leave —.”

She enjoyed herself mightily, much so by dint of this vanity of hers, I do fear. She was not delicately susceptible to the beauty of the scenes and landscape, though it might influence her with a general placid impression, it was an essentially mundane charm that delighted her. Had she been a plain or ugly person, she would have gone a little higher in her pleasure perhaps and repaid Allans kindness more to his satisfaction, who watched her rather meditatively in short silent intervals. At the hotel in Eastham she was the same, exceedingly self-complacent to sit at one of the tables in the garden, as respectable and worthy of deference as the rest of the honorable guests, so secure in her position that she'd laugh in the face of any grandee, male or female, whom she once might have played upon. Allan took her round to the fields through the wood after they had partaken of their refreshments and finally struck into the high-road to Rockferry. Musing upon the loveliness of the fields and the sweetness of the rural air he said to his companion:

„I suppose we go on by this way and return to Liverpool with the steamer from Rockferry.”

But this plan did not suit his lady. She wanted the longest possible route on board the steamer. So her husband, to oblige her, e'en consented to turn round and

back to Eastham according to Mrs. Allans fancy. When they came out upon the hotel-garden again, a party of ladies accompanied by one gentleman, were just returning to a private carriage with beautiful family-escutcheons painted upon it, that was waiting near. Allan drew back at sight of the group — for in the lady who was approaching foremost he recognized Miss Georgiana Osborne, the brilliant niece of Mr. Rosen's. The gentleman present was not this latter personage, but a cavalier on the verge of not being called unquestionably young.

But in the act of putting himself upon his guard, not only Georgianas eyes adverted to him and paused, doubtful whether to acknowledge him or not, but the pair of elder ladies following perceived him too, and a wild shriek rang through the mild eve and brought all the retainers and attendants from the hotel to the spot.

„Mrs. Bickering has fainted!“ ran round the cry for water and smelling-salts and assistance.

Allan hurriedly beat his retreat during the throng and confusion ensuing.

Taking advantage of the rare spring-day of that April, the Bickering party had evidently entertained their guests, the Osbornes with a trip in their family-vehicle from their present abode in Woodferry. The Osborne ladies no more belonged to Mr. Rosens household. In the preceding year a couple of wedding-cards, daintily united by a silver cord, arrived, addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Allan Graham. Dianas delight was great at this first instance of a polite attention she was made to participate in. The cards referred to the nuptials of Major Edward Melville and Miss Winifred Rosen.

Though this latter young lady was assumed to nurse a preference for a particular gentleman of her acquaintance, it must be stated in consolation to unfavored lovers that the first-best does not put the second-best out of consideration. Besides a coat red as the gore on Indian battle-

fields and a young Mars who has hewn and killed his dozens of enemies with unparallelled vigor and valor, and directed the routing of so many unkenneled savages, has something really irresistible in the dove-eyes of a gentle young lady.

When Miss Winifred Rosen left to brighten Major Melvilles armor, happily a son of Mrs. Osbornes, having long been in the civil service in Calcutta, came home to settle in London as a magnificent bachelor. Mrs. and Miss Osborne thereupon were conjured to cheer his solitude and they left George Rosen, who might now not care so much for frequent grand assemblies in his house, to himself and a widowers quiet evening-circle of friends.

It follows that the Osbornes were only on a visit in Liverpool at the present occasion and feasted by their intimates, the musical Mrs. Bickering and her nieces.

When Allan had regained the deck of the homeward-bound steamboat, glad to be away from Eastham ground now, his wife whispered him: "That was the mother of the young man you was sent to prison for, eh Allan?"

He did not answer her. He was taciturn and meditative during the whole of the passage back, the unforeseen encounter had given him a shock. Mutely still he stepped on land in Liverpool and went up Water-Street with his wife. Diana was soundly disgusted with the effect of that intermezzo upon her companion. She could not put up with this unreckoned-for disturbance resignedly.

"People are often sent to prison," she began, "because chances are against them, not because they have done more than another."

"Yes."

"You have done nothing. You have done really nothing."

"I have done something. Don't speak to me, please, Diana."

"Why shall I not speak to you? I'll speak to you when-

ever I choose. You can't forbijd me that. Do you attempt to do it?"

"No."

He was entirely absent-minded and really not able to collect his ideas for any reply but yes or no. Suddenly, in the midst of Dianas irritation Mr. and Mrs. Kenyon, taking an evening promenade, hailed them. The memory of Thomas Larkes deed had not detained the good old lady from regarding Diana as the wife of a friend and treat her with as much unreserved kindness as the latters expanding nature allowed space to display. The thiefs daughter, not demanding from her that intimacy which she deemed herself justified in expecting from Mr. Grahams family felt quite warmly towards the gentle woman, to whom a thought of self-consciousness was absolutely and obviously strange.

While the gentleman shook hands cordially with his former assistant, Mrs. Allan pressed the hand of his lady more sincerely than she did that of many another.

"Oh you have taken a trip" said Mr. Kenyon, attending to Dianas voluble explanations, "that's right on such a fine day. I'm glad you did, Mr. Graham."

"It was for Dianas birthday," replied Allan, making a superhuman effort to hide his distraction.

"Better still. And a nice little wife she looks at your side. You seem as though you had passed a pleasant day together, my dear," remarked Mr. Kenyon, who rather liked Diana for her bright face which had become all dimples and beams since the meeting.

Allans cast of humor eventually was passed over unremarked and the worthy couple took leave pondering among each other that Mr. Graham might have drawn quite a tolerable lot with his extraordinary consort after all. As the distance was lengthening between the two parties Mrs. Kenyon once looked back at the young pair and brought

her face back again with such a soft, good-natured smile upon it as only such a guileless soul is capable of originating in its hope and trust for the best.

Diana was saying the while to her husband: „Now you could speak, sir. But for me you wouldn't take the trouble.”

„Diana” cried Allan exasperated, „can't you imagine that I'm in no humor to continue our chitchat after that encounter we have had? Can't you take some consideration in this case?”

„I can't consider such sensitiveness. You are of no other mould than we are, than my father is, or do you believe you are? I tell you you are a man and he's a man and you have both seen how a man gets into prison. Don't impose upon me, you can't do it, you can't give yourself an appearance of being quite aloof from our cast as Richard could have done. You needn't think that you could not listen to an admonition from me.”

Arrived at their home, Allan sat down in the parlor with a deepdrawn sigh and his lady went up-stairs to put by her walking attire. By and by she came back and went in and out several times stealing furtive glances at her husbands face. At last she came to his side, sat down on a low footstool near him and tried his communicative powers once more.

„Do you know, Allan,” she began with something of a giggle, „that two of those ladies to-day were very good acquaintances of mine, though I not of them, it appeared, ha, ha?”

Allan response indicated plainly that this was none of the most agreeable suggestions to him.

„It was through Mr. Rosen that I made Richards acquaintance, do you know that?”

„Please call him Mr. Lansdale, Diana. No, I wonder how you made his acquaintance through Mr. Rosen.”

„I'll tell you how. I had brought some property, which my father had found a customer for ahem, from London to Liverpool. Here I met a young man who professed himself a sweetheart of a scullery-maid of Mr. Rosens, whom our party took some interest in at the time. So I knew some odds about him. I went back by the train. I was going to say a word to a person in Birmingham, who had fixed a letterbox as a place of meeting. Having separated from him, I observed a closed envelope lying on the ground by the letter-box, which had evidently been lost and miscarried. Of course I took it up and saw that it was directed to George Rosen. As it was a thin little thing I threw it down again, for I wouldn't do a service to Mr. Rosen, not I. But who should catch me up afterwards in the railway carriage, as though that letter were mine, but Richard. I put a knowing face upon it, as I had the chance, and a bad job I made of it. For Richard afterwards continued the acquaintance and I had enough to do not to be brought by him into any more connexion with the Rosens. For a long time I kept a sharp eye upon them to counteract the way in which I had exposed myself unwittingly in the beginning. One sometimes is too clever, you see. And so I grew quite intimate with the Rosen household, for I made up for my shortsightedness as dear Richards betrothed." How she enjoyed the memory of her past artifices and how she said Richard and Richard again with a jerk in obstinacy against her husbands desire.

„I feel myself quite a friend of the Rosens and Winfred Rosen, whom I almost was jealous of. Richard might have deemed her a match, you know." After a second wanton outbreak of mirth, Diana however grew serious, she lifted her eyes to her companion, and of a sudden exclaimed: „What a good man you are, Allan!"

„What now, my dear?"

„I have never seen a man who had patience, until I saw you. I have been provoking you all during this last couple of hours and you have stood it all and made no sign. Others would have killed me if I had pricked them as I often did you. I did it on purpose sometimes, because I like to see how patient you are. I did it on purpose to-day."

„Was that kind, Diana, was that good?"

„No, it wasn't, but I had my delight in admiring you. I've been wicked and you have never said a hard word to me. You have said gentle words to me and when I was too bad, you have been silent. I know it very well. I admire you for many other things, but what I wonder at is your patience, it is indeed."

„Could we have reached anything else if we did not proceed with patience? Will you have patience, my love, to become a very dear, virtuous woman?"

„Am I improved in the least degree since you brought me home the winter before last?"

„Certainly you are, my little wife, certainly you are, thank God."

„Then I may be getting on still, mayn't I? I wish I shall, for your sake, dear, darling husband. I do intend to, really I do, I owe it to you, I know very well."

„Not to me alone, but to yourself and to God most of all. You are coming to understand that, are you not, Diana?" Allan said ardently, seeing her softened as he never yet had done, he drew her to him with a quickly beating heart.

„I owe it to you most of all" retortsd Mrs. Allan perversely, but the dolorous shock young Graham had received that afternoon was gently melting notwithstanding into a lighter and more soothing feeling. It did not seem impossible just then that things were working round not only for Dianas salvation but for Allans happiness too.

Chapter XIII.**Sorrow and Fears.**

In the modest office where the chief of the great firm of Michael Lansdale & Sons had his seat, Mr. Lansdale senior had had a long business-conference with his youngest son, who if he was not the head of the manufactory was at least neck and shoulders to it. After their grave councils were concluded at the hour when it was time to repair home for the accustomed late dinner, Richard begged his father to take this meal at his house to-night, as it was a disengaged evening with him and his wife, in accordance with the simple taste of his senior.

The season being midsummer Miss Ansted and Miss Lansdale were absent at a watering-place. Four years of married life had passed over the Coketown home of Richard and Ethel, as they had passed over Allan and Diana too, much in the same way as the earliest months of their union whose memory we have traced. Small variations were frequent, important changes developed under cover of a slow graduality and were not to be fixed into prominent points, day following day as it does in life with nothing to mention about when a history of the past is to be told.

As the father and son were walking together to that mansion which was quite a feature now in one of the fashionable streets of their native town, the latter said:

„Ethel is very much depressed by the tidings about her brothers illness. I must prepare you to find but sorry company at home to-night.”

„Ah poor Allan Graham He is very bad, is he?”

„I believe he is. A fever as poor people get in such unhealthy places as they must inhabit, and he always deal-

ing with the sick and diseased. The diseases of the poor seem so much more infectious and poisonous generally, as those of the rich. And a druggist like Mr. Graham goes into their houses, their airless, reeking houses. Clean, well-kept hospitals are quite a relief to think of, to plan about, after contemplating the misery of this class which exists in great cities Coketown has much left to be done yet, father, all this population of workmen, their requisites inexhaustible. So much is done by some holders of great fortune, but its not the money alone, its the inversion, the active head to originate practical and efficacious schemes. Whe have effected some considerable benefits, have we not, papa, that aid which I drew out for the widows and orphans of our factory laborers? And the assistance for young men in the cultivation of talent for designing and art industry? The number benefited in this manner amounts to hundreds But we could do something greater, something more comprehensive still. The business is increasing from year to year and our influence among the citizenship is expanding with it, we may prepare ourselves to have magnificent chances and to do honor to them, as we always did in just balance to our means, you, father, before me and I after your model."

The pair of respected, distinguished citizens had reached the younger mans doorstep during their conversation of public furtherance. Mrs. Lansdale received them with a grave face, that brought the remembrance of their sick relation back to them. At an early moment she took her husband aside and informed him of an intelligence received in the meanwhile in a letter from her mother. Richards face disturbed, whether with concern or some other emotion, when he turned back to Michael Lansdale.

My wife says that she has received news from Mrs Graham which will cause her to depart to morrow morning for Liverpool."

„The state of things is very grave then? I heartily regret it, my dear Ethel,” exclaimed Mr. Lansdale, taking the hand of his daughter-in-law. „Your brother, and such a good young man — I hope, I hope it is not coming to the last extreme with him. A strong constitution as you told me the doctor had said in the beginning.”

Ethel accepted the expression of his sympathy with somewhat modified warmth. No advertence to the old friendship between all the members of her husbands and her mothers family was contained in Mr. Lansdales speech, only a condolence on her behalf and a distantly-worded appreciation of her brothers character. Ethel knew this point of view prevalent in her present surroundings and the gates of her heart were kept shut. Mr. Lansdale was really concerned about Allans precarious condition, with rather more spontaneity of sentiment than Richard evinced at that moment.

„Do not let me impede your preparations, Ethel” he said, „nor will I intrude upon your time long. Poor Allan Graham, it would be a pity for that wife he married if something were to happen to him. He would be missed in his sphere” he remarked in a low voice, as Mrs. Lansdale availed herself of her father-in-laws considerate injunction and left the room „Will you be going with her?” the elder gentleman turned to her husband.

„I? No.”

„It will be a sad journey for her. I thought you might intend to accompany her, as you are very regardful of her always.”

„My obligations do not go so far as to accompany her to Mr. Grahams. You know that the family is a point of altercation between us. I do not believe that my attendance would import much to Ethel. She is very cold she is very cold towards me. She is a dutiful wife a dutiful husband, we content ourselves with t

,That seems strange, considering —."

„Considering former reports that were whispered about Ethel?" Richard gave a short, uneasy laugh. „This frostiness of temper is nothing that will satisfy a man of my cast of character and sentiment, it is nothing like what I expected when I chose the consort of my life, but one never reads the human soul beforehand, before experience. The fault lay in my imagination, which was too soaring, too glorifying. I would never have reached my ideal of domestic bliss with another woman either. Imaginative persons come to this perception at last, they stand alone with their beautiful images about the world and must come to grief where they need a second person to render vitality to their dreams. What do our public plans amount to, when we ourselves do not vouch for the best part of them? The attempt to find the realisation of my inward model in Ethel has ended in shipwreck, so do most objects which I do not have exclusively in my own hand. Yet she aids me in many of my purposes and is a lady to be proud of for the fame she has merited herself in Coketown."

The lady thus superciliously disposed of had actually nursed the belief that her husband might deem it fit to offer his companionship upon this signal occasion. As nothing of the sort resulted however she was ready at the respective hour to start alone on her journey to Liverpool.

Ethels last action relative to her departure was a visit to a small chamber adjoining her dressing-room. A little girl was there under the care of a sensible-looking nursery-governess. A lovely child with fair hair and the violet-blue eyes of Richard Lansdale, yet with something of Ethels severer beauty set like deepening shades into her face.

„Mamma is coming to say good-bye," Ethel addressed her tenderly, „I am going to look after uncle Allan, Grace,

my love, who is very, very ill. Will my little daughter send him a message?"

"Mamma says good-bye? Are you taking a long walk?" asked little Miss Lansdale, looking wistfully into her mothers face, who was stooping down to her.

"A walk that will take me some days, dear, and a sad walk, because uncle Allan is so ill. What does Grace say to her mamma and uncle Allan? it's a long good bye, my child."

"Tell uncle Allan to get well and come here. Then I shall remain with papa? Good-bye, mamma."

How lingeringly the mother took the little hands again and again and kissed the infant mouth, taking the first leave for days from the darling of her heart. What dimensions her intended absence assumed in her fond gaze, oh the contrast of a mothers yearning with the childs responsive caress. Grace evidently had no unpleasant impression of remaining behind with papa and was quite unsusceptible to Ethels pangs of separation, short or long as it might be.

When this daughter was born, the union between Richard and Ethel had become so superficial, that she was welcomed as a link that might concentrate her parents affections in a common focus again. Ethel held her in her arms as a consolation in a sadly desolated life. Mrs. Lansdale had become cold, as her husband had said, she was for ever removed from the places where her feelings still nestled warmly and the demonstration of the matronly beauties of her soul was straightly bounded and repressed. It was not that Richards demeanor was open to blame generally, that his attitude as a husband would have been found fault with by impartial observers or that even his true feelings towards his wife were deficient to the exigencies of conjugal attachment. No, only Richards character, so estimable in the valuation of a certain class of

judges, had continued at such a rate to oppose the postulates erected by his wife, since first he shook her reliance in the discussion about Allans marriage, that she began to read his daily, his hourly comportment with the criticism of reason instead of the glorification of love. Silently, stealthily, reality had touched every fancy, every preconception of hers as a drop of water falling upon embers. The bridegroom to whom Ethel Graham had sworn the marriage vow of eternally loving and honoring him, was not the bridegroom who stood by her side in flesh and blood. The intimacy of home-life must inevitably disclose what the association of friendship had forborn to divulge and avow. By his every form of speech Richard stood confessed of his unconscious leaning to prejudiced and trivial views. The high standard of candor, good-will and devotion which alone could have secured the loyal attachment of so self-sufficient a lady as Ethel was, crumbled away into conceited pettiness as she tested her husbands qualities. There was no misinterpreting, no palliating Richards intrinsic worth any more — egotism was the ground stone of his nature, egotism was the kernel of his endearing qualities, of his apparent virtues, of his captivating exterior. Ethels character was decided to a degree, that love did not survive her vanished imaginings, as would have been the case with many a less strongly-lined disposition. The affection that gives no account of its yearnings, no motives for its persistence was not hers; Ethels love and trust was the prize of authentic excellence or the miscarried gift of an erroneous belief in it. Richard may have scaled the highest subtlety of egoism, where it is decked with a thousand self-deceiving attributes of fairer qualities, but egoism is the lowest grade in human nature and the disillusion of dreams like those his wife had cherished from her childhood. Ethel Lansdale, severed and isolated by her rare disappointment from a fruitful

ground for her hard-grained virtues stopped at the place of honor which behove her in being firmly the dutiful consort of Richard Lansdale, the respected manufacturer of Coketown. The reciprocity of influence which bears such beautifying and exalting fruit in our tender alliances was excluded, that charm in a wife, the trustful leaning on a strong husbands aid never graced Ethel Lansdale, no gentler vinctures fettered her to her second home, except the sweet tie of her motherhood. All the dreams, all the betrayed hopes of her past flew to the cradle of little Grace yes Grace, to be trained by her, to be made what her precursory love had but been supposed to be of himself. Sacred refuge of the mothers blasted wishes and faith, Gods blessing be on you and hold open thy heart to be filled with a handwriting that be not thy own! Reconciliation of thy mothers disenchantment, of thy fathers misconstruction of himself, fulfil thy holiest destiny and remember that thou livest not thy own life alone, but the life of thy parents. May self end here and loves reign be supreme!

While the Liverpool train was rattling Mrs. Lansdale along towards the source of her prevailing care and of many a general disquietude, the small door of Allan Grahams lodging was opened by Diana in person to a visitor who had not even touched the knocker yet.

„How is he this morning?” inquired the new arrival, showing in her first gesture that she was a constant attendant of the sick mans house, that she had ceded indeed the task of being his sole and continual nurse only to the patients wife — his mother.

„Worse” replied Diana in a low, expressionless voice, adding in the same manner: „The doctor has given him up.”

Mrs. Graham proceeded to the parlor without making an immediate reply, the daughter-in-law silently following her. Putting by some things which she had brought with her the former spoke: „I have made arrangements to stay here entirely now. How rapidly he has been getting worse. Let us pray, let us pray God to leave him to us. Oh my daughter, our prayers are what will most avail him.”

„I have prayed” answered the younger woman sullenly. „The Almighty scoffs at my prayers. I have knelt in supplication day and night and Allan has grown worse, Allan has been sinking under my hands; His wrath is upon me. I have been doing evil things and thought perhaps that I never would be punished. Allan is dying to punish me.”

Hopeless despondency was paralysing the anguish pent up in the heart of Mr. Grahams wife, the fear of his loss was distracting his mother so as to affect in a degree her ordinary quiet religious reliance.

„Child, child, his life or death do not bear reference to you alone. Die to punish you! And should he not live to console us all? If the doctor has given him up, will not God save him? The doctors word is nothing to me. It lies in the Almightys hand. It is His will we must look upon with trembling, we must ask if so great a grief is indeed determined for us.”

„It is. Don’t I see it? My prayers will bring it down all the sooner, it seems to me. Oh Mrs. Graham, oh mother,” cried the poor creature in a suddenly released paroxism of terror and desolation, „I would do all, I have told God I would truly do all if He will leave him to me. I have promised Allan so repeatedly to be humble and good, and I have never been so for a week together. If He would only leave me the opportunity now to fulfil my best purposes yet. If He will only not pronounce the dreadful ,too late.’ I have lived on carelessly hitherto,

sometimes remorse smote me and I wanted to give Allan pleasure, but then my old impulses came upon me again; I was proud with nothing to be proud of. And now all this rises up against me as a reproach, a menace, now I would have ten lives to be good and humble enough in. Wouldn't I fulfil my promises after having passed through this? Allan, Allan are my past faults taking you from me and cannot my present devotion stay you, for me to do my duty by you yet?"

Mrs. Grahams tears were set flowing by this wild outburst of the others sorrow. The two natures apart in everything else were meeting in their love for the sick man who was wavering on the verge between life and death. The intensity of their common feeling made them suddenly more related to each other than to all the rest of mankind, it put them in each others arms with their fears and their consolations.

"Oh Mrs. Graham, if I should be left alone again, to think now of existing without him, without his aid, without his love. Yes, he has loved me, the only one of a better world who has been tender with me, tenderer than my own father, and asked more of me, more, ah me, than I ever learned to give. He is the only one who would have this lasting endurance with me, oh Lord, dear Lord" — sobbing she hid her face in her hands.

Then Allans mother came round to her and encircled the slight, quivering figure in her arms.

"Diana, my dear, you will never, never be alone, happen what will on the subject of our solicitude. She who loves Allan as you do belongs to the love of us all. Take heart, dear child, and take confidence in our affection. I am the mother and my children are the brothers and sisters of Allans wife. This is a moment to cast all minor distinctions away for ever, for now you let us see that you are my sons wife in good, full right, in the right of love.

You seemed cold many a time that we met, but you are not, thank God, for Allans sake and your sake and the sake of all. Diana, compose yourself and pray 'Gods will be done.' It is the best of prayers, my own dear."

"Gods will be done" — repeated Diana, but questioning, not as a prayer.

"Yes, my love, for how many times would we not have changed the course of His plans with a moments prayer? Would not you if you had prayed at many a great pass of your life, praying for earthly designs and not waiting for Him to take His own time for the end?"

"Ah, I would have clamored to become Richards lady then, and to have riches that were not stolen and to be bowed to by every creature of the universe," exclaimed Diana with a smile of her vivacity breaking through her tears. "And I would never have nestled on my dear husbands breast and thought how beautiful love is and trusted that it was there notwithstanding my lowness and my trickery. But for him I would not have believed in superior goodness. Miserable Rich — Mr. Lansdale, miserable wealth — would it buy Allans life now?"

"No," said Mrs. Graham promptly, "no, rather than that the possession of means would alter the decision of the Master of life and death, your resolutions for good, your petitions for exercising them yet, may. There is no other strength than the earnest immolation of the heart. Diana, be steady in that, and God may consent to try you still again. But if he will not, Diana, you will remain faithful too, will you not, and remember that He has taken another way to test if you are true? If you are firm by force of the love that you have tasted once and for all."

"Ah I wouldn't do anything that Allan abhors again, it would be an outrage upon him, my only, faithful dear. If I am forsaken, at the worst I can but starve and all

the better for me if Allan be expecting me in heaven and the Almighty willing to take me up."

"You will never feel forsaken as long as any one of us lives, I hope, but if ever you should lose all what you possess now, you will know that he who has once loved is never alone again in Gods own world. It is this feeling that helps one wonderfully in life and death, in everything what the Omnipotent resolves for us. You have grasped the thought, Diana, when you say that you would not do anything against Allans wish, even if — —

The end of her utterance was choked, but their understanding was established already. The woman bred in guilt and the woman of untainted, virtuous conduct had reconciled their glowing wishes to the Creators will by force of one great, pacifying, inward revelation, the belief in the supremacy and eternity of what is good. The conscientious education of careful tutors and the rough education of life had landed two souls, alike for all their seeming disparity, on the same shore of a beautiful religious faith. The spirit of truth was celebrating a holy moment over an atom of humanity that had rendered homage to the deep-rumining essence of life. The moral distinction that had severed Allans wife from his family was effaced at last by his patient work, and he might even that day leave it and say to his Heavenly Judge: „I have rescued a soul that was near being lost," and perhaps he would add, full of the sublime return of goodness: „Let it be Thy will to restore her to me soon, for we love each other with great yearning and constancy."

Allan had made an honorable woman out of the straggler, whom most of his class would have deemed too low and contemptible to touch. He had done what no public beneficence, no wholesale assistance would have effected, he had done what it is only every single mans work to do, which if it were performed by all in their several

capacities to do it, would leave perhaps the grosser vice expelled from society by and by. Well might he live or die upon this labor of his last years with no fear of the destiny that might trace its invisible circles around him,

Chapter XIV.

The Patient.

Ethel arrived about noon at her brothers dwelling. She asked, after having exchanged but a few words with her sister-in-law: „May I go at once to see him?”

„Surely” was the reply, „if you will only find him in consciousness. It would do him good to see you, for he loves you so much.”

Mrs. Graham greeted her daughter before the door of the sick-room. Then they all went in together and Ethel approached the bed. Diana stood a little back, keeping her regard fixed on the guest however. Ethel looked down on the patient, he lay as in a lethargy, with eyes that were not fast closed but did not seem to see. She whispered to him and touched him cautiously. Suddenly he opened his eyes wide, moved his head a little and looked at her. But when he spoke it was only to call Diana in a parched, feeble voice.

His wife stepped quickly up to Ethels side, saying to him as she pointed to her: „Here is your sister come to see you from Coketown. Here is Ethel asking after you” with heightened emphasis, trying to rouse him by the sound of the dear familiar name.

Allan looked again at his sister, smiled, and while his sight slowly imparted recognition to his mazed brain he murmured with the unceremoniousness of illness, that makes

little ado about new apparitions: „Much trouble. She has much trouble with me” faintly indicating Diana.

„We are all in great trouble until you get better, Allan, dearest” rejoined his sister. „I wish to do something for you too, now that I am come. How hot your hand is and your brow. Oh how glad I am that I am with you at least.” Believing to observe by Allans manner and look that he still lingered on the subject of Diana, she felt fain to return to it: „Your wife ministers well to you, doesn't she? Is this a cooling draught she gives you from time to time? Let me give it you next time, as I couldn't do anything for you all these days past until now. I'll share the care with mamma and Diana.”

Allan nodded, a short pause and he turned to his sister again: „How is Grace?”

A ray of brightness glanced over Mrs. Lansdales face. She answered with alacrity and exchanged some rational sentences with the patient as long as she dared without apprehension of overstraining him. She had sat down at the head of the bed, and as she let wane the conversation she held his hand clasped in hers. He lay quite still and they expected that he would fall off by and by into his fevered slumbers. Ethel felt a tightening pressure of his fingers, he was rousing himself from his dumbness for one more effort.

„Diana calls our mamma mother now” he remarked to Ethel with a contented smile settling on his lips. Thus he sank back into his apathic repose, which held him for hours in its oppressive trance. It grew silent in the room, save a whispered remark now and then, the three women watching or pursuing their own anxious thoughts. Ethels observation took in two things, the gentle and apt hand of Diana, as she attended to all the little requirements of the sick-room and the sweet tenderness with which her mother met her on occasion. Mrs. Lansdale had but

little acquaintance with Allans home. Although she had made a point of calling there once, in maintenance of her rights against her husbands superciliousness, she by natural taste had of course preferred to see her brother at their mothers when she stayed in Liverpool. But however haughtily she might have been impelled to measure the distance between persons of her rank and a tainted, uneducated child of the rabble, her mind was pure and unsophisticated enough to follow with applause the indications of her sister-in-laws reformed qualities and advantageous disposition. After a while Diana conducted the new-comer into the apartment which was to accommodate her during her stay and attendance at the house. The formers first words on being alone with her guest divulged the reason why she had watched her so intently the moment of her saluting the patient.

„How frightened you looked when you set eyes upon him“ said Allans wife. „I could see better in your features than with my own eyes what signs he bears in his face, because he has been declining so gradually before me. Oh you blanched and started! You had not imagined him so bad. Oh Mrs. Lansdale, he has not the look of the dying already?“

„God beware. But he is so emaciated and wasted. And his eyes are so terribly bright. Would it were Gods will that this harassing state be quickly passed.“ The lady folded her hands and drooped her eyelids, a short, fervent prayer welled up from her heart where she stood — then she turned to her companion again.

„You look much worn, poor Diana, you do not leave him night and day, I am sure.“

„Never, if I must not. I owe him every minute of my life. And I am so dreadfully afraid that he might die, that I want to be awake and hold him fast and throw myself between if ever the death-angel comes. It is not

the care and the waking, it is simply the fear that eats the marrow out of me. And then, whenever he is conscious I want him to see me, serving him, brightening and putting things to rights"

Ethel listened with a still somewhat superior smile of approbation, nodding and proceeding with her arrangements in order to return immediately to the bed-room. Her stiff reserve towards her brothers wife was softening into compassion, on the way, it was not impossible, to melt into something more indulgent still. For Ethel would rejoice at nothing more sincerely and kindly than in discovering traits in her one-day rival of becoming a worthier wife to the brother of her love. This was the significance and importance of Diana in Ethels eyes. Those circumstances which had associated her to Richard were merged in a train of bitter things where they made little figure of themselves, so little indeed that Ethels husband might even have been justified in preferring it a degree greater.

The two sisters by marriage had returned to Mrs. Graham meanwhile.

"You ought to take a few hours rest, my love," said the elder lady with motherly solicitude, as Diana was in the act of taking her seat againt at the foot of the bed.

She protested wearily, but an affectionate authority was brought into the field against her, till she could not but retire into a contiguous department to pay a small instalment to defied nature.

Her mother-in-law rose by and bye to look if she had really settled into rest.

"She's profoundly asleep, poor child," said the good woman as she re-entered to her daughter. "Ah my dear, I begin to think now that it is a real luck for Allan to have this little wife. The way she tends him and desires to do what is most agreeable to him, how she feels her incumbencies in short. She has come to an understanding

of Christian duty at last, and meseems many a one grown and reared in it would not have it so freshly in their intents as this poor being who has learned it from her husband. It comes all back to him what he has done for her."

"Would that it did, indeed, but she'll never be like an educated person, not like the women Allan might have aspired to, according to my taste."

"She's clever enough to get a good deal of education into her head yet, when she is compliant and tractable. But even if she were not, having formed her heart as it is evident at present, Allan would always be happy through his work. There was a day when your uncle was afraid that Diana would draw him down. But my son is a firm man, thank God," she said with a beautiful, oh so beautiful mothers pride. "He might have found a worse subject than this young woman, but must there not be some goodness in every human creature, and should not thorough goodness bring it to victory as a holy rule? Ethel, my dear, if you would do aught for Allans sake, love Diana, love her." Mrs. Graham bent over to her daughter in an eager whisper, laying her hand on her knee and looking intently into her grand, clear eye.

It was not probable that the scrupulously truthful Ethel should give a promise to love her hitherto all but despised sister-in-law just yet, but she responded to the demand as her mother had expected she would. It is perhaps not in every virtuous persons heart to yearn towards all humanity even in its vicious contortions and guise of anomalies, but it is in every good heart to warm more and more to any creature that declares the triumph of virtue in whatever shape it may be.

As the days passed on, with that cloud of death hanging and lowering over them, Ethels temper softened evidently under the sovereignty of her love-wrought emotions and

her bowing before the mighty, inscrutable Lord. The doctor who knew no help was dismissed as his fees only weighed heavily on that straitened household and Mr. Kenyon, the friend and experienced adviser had sadly and officiously taken his place.

Writing to her husband the day next upon her arrival, Mrs. Lansdale also spoke in a rarely gentle, longing strain, unconsciously feeling as though a pathetic moment had come that gave an opportunity of conciliating many of the wants in their former conjugal intercourse.

"I have found Allan at deaths door," she wrote, "yes, Richard, from an earthly point of view it is more possible that he will die than recover. O you will imagine what our feelings are! There was a time when you called yourself his friend too. Long ago, have you not a vestige of remembrance of it? How my brother is to regain sound health at all in the sombre surroundings that belong to his business, I sometimes shudder to think. I couldn't live well for a month down in Mr. Kenyons damp, stony shop, with the contact of all those soiled invalids of the inferior classes. He ought to come out of it at least to recover. But how can he? He is cast on his couch of suffering and the Almightys hand alone can raise him. I pray night and day that He will. Dear Richard, will you join me in this appeal? You have never had a dissonancy with Allan that could not be obliterated by such an event as this. The crisis must decide itself in a few days I should think. If it turns to ill there may be a few days and if it turns to better, there will be a deal of anxiety left still, for sure."

Doing duty as Allans nurse after having dispatched this letter, Ethel was accosted by the patient in his low, desultory manner. She had to bend her ear very sedulously over him to understand his articulation.

"I should be sorry to leave."

"To leave, dear?"

"Especially Diana. I should be too sorry to leave Diana, if I must die."

"Allan, brother, there's none of us who could bear the thought of your leaving us," cried Ethel, keeping her tears back by excitement.

"Ah, but I'm not necessary to any of you. Diana might need me yet — I hope she might now do without me. — It's sad to part, but what I long to stay for is Diana. — She might be a daughter to mamma already now. — Ethel, I love her, my little wife, you would never have patience with her, but remember that always when I may be dead. We love each other so much, you see."

Yes, they loved each other so much, those two, that by right of this deep fraternal attachment he was sure of opening an entrance for a third person into their bond by the simple attestation of his love for her. He had put his appeal in telling fashion, more so with the mystic shadow of death intervening to intensify all feeling. He left Ethel one of the trustees for Diana, whatever stress he might put on the differences of their characters. If Ethel's heart had ever been shut to Diana, would it not have flown open wide to love a being whom her probably dying brother loved? Allan, having locked her hand in his powerless grasp lay silent and tranquil in his blessed confidence.

This invocation of his sisters good-will seemed the last sublime effort of Allans mental activity and vitality, which unpronounced would not have let him go to rest and having gathered all his strength surrendered them to his fast-encroaching disease. They were the last words of sense Allan spoke during the hours of his crisis.

Silent figures glided into his room, looked at him lingeringly, and he knew them not. His passionate musical friend glared into the film spread over his eyes, half doubt-

ful whether not a superhuman spiritualistic effort could magnetize the floating powers of life. His uncle stood beside the bed-curtains and tried to temper the wishes and resignation of himself and his companions. Diana was walking the way to the tender regard of Allans nearest of kindred. What would they not have forgiven her while they saw the unremitting care she took of her husband, while her emotions, wild and uncontrolled from her irregular breeding, gushed forth their full natural heat on a kindly, sympathetic bosom. Ethel was but the last to discover that Diana had attained an important place in her brothers life and would consequently gain a seemly one in the family. She had been promoted from charity to love and could hold her own among Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Adams, Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Graham and the rest, unto her own self. Diana was not a poor object of compassion hanging on to Allan by a humane device, but a wife in all the modest splendor of her immunities.

Once a strange confusion in Diana seemed apparent to Mrs. Graham, when she having had the watch by her husbands bedside, encountered her companions again. She had listened no doubt to the patients incoherent murmurings, which were mostly confined however to his calling upon his friends or any short and trivial sentences. It was improbable that Allan should make novel-like divulgences tending to cause Diana disturbance. Possible rather that his manner had horrified her, although she was not unacquainted with bad fevers.

It was on the same afternoon that Mr. Rosen made his third call at his old favorites. He was staying at Rhyl during the time and as soon as he heard of Allans dangerous illness was zealous in asking after the patients progress every time that he came in to town from his summer residence. He showed once more that his concern for Allan Graham was of unabated warmth, little oppor-

tunity as he had to display it. From the sick man's lips he had received the assurance that this was realised by the latter with earnest gratification. To-day his visit of sympathy was no more able to afford satisfaction in this quarter, but referred more especially to young Mrs. Graham, whom he had momentarily cheered on the preceding occasions by the chivalrous courtliness with which he always would treat the wife of a friend.

Sallying out of the parlor, where most of the visitors were wont to detain themselves in whispered colloquy at present, he came upon Mrs. Moffat and Clare who were just entering together. The merchants acquaintance with the latter was but of the slightest, the former on the contrary he met with all his gentlemanly cordiality. It was long ago since he had not seen the artist, since a time of doleful memory in Allans history. Mr. Rosen wisely did not touch by one indication on the past, save by the very eloquence of his friendly salutation.

"All Mr. Grahams friends are meeting here now, I suppose," said Mr. Rosen, as he released the hand he had been shaking.

"Yes, sir, they are not many, but such as would die for him and think it a good work done to earth. People who are wrapt up in him and in what will happen to him.—Thank you for being here," cried the violinist anew, as he wrung the merchants hand a second time. "I thank you fervently, exquisitely for being here again among the number of his friends, for showing too what he deserves. Thank you, sir."

"There's hardly reason to thank me for what my own heart prompts me to do, my good Mr. Moffat," said Mr. Rosen, smiling gravely.

"Ah, that your heart prompts you to do it, sir! If this be the last I shall remember of you, it will be a good thing to think of. Good bye, Mr. Rosen, you can not do

anything for my happiness like being the friend of Allan Graham. Good bye, sir, and thank you again."

The singular man rushed up-stairs, where Arthur Clare was already watching his insensible nephew. The latter remained in a sleep-like stupor, from which he would probably wake either for this world or the next. The clergyman stayed longest of all visitors in the sick-room, as though fain to snatch the most of the time perhaps remaining with that beloved form breathing by his side. Mr. Moffat in his unruly impatience wandered down to the parlor to speak about the hopes and fears entertained for the patient, came up again, and stopped shy of his own disturbing restlessness before the door of the bed-room, standing slightly ajar.

When Mr. Clare finally abandoned his dumb watch to hold the usual conference below, he left his friend still wavering on the landing tortured by all his unhinged impulses. Allans mother and sister did not follow him out, only Diana was with him, seeking support in his strong and tender christianity.

The expressions of her agony were a little altered in their character to-day. Hitherto she had always tried to extricate from him declarations tending to soothe the apprehensions for Allans endangered life. At present she began:

"Uncle, if there is no help I would only have him clear and strong again for some hours to have a long talk with him once more. My heart is full of things that I must say to him. I could forgive fate to take him away, but let me have speech with him it must."

"We cannot say must, my child, we are bound to accommodate ourselves to the ways of the Almighty. He will and this as He knows it to be best."

"No, I will speak with him," cried Diana fiercely with her old spirit in her grief.

Mr. Clare regarded her gravely. „And if God will not have it, Diana?”

She looked at him and burst into a violent passion of tears. All the frailty of her will and purposes before the imperturbation of Divine Destiny became sensible to her, all her want of peaceful resignation shivered appalled under the acknowledgement of her utter impotence. Her tender uncle had taken her in his arms and let her weep out the revolt of her soul there, for words she had no more of whatever nature her submission to his uncontrovertible rejoinder may have been. She took his caresses and his endearing exhortations quietly, perhaps they consoled her in some degree, perhaps she was imperceptibly appeased by that best of comforts, the leaning on a fellow-beings faithfulness.

After a while the good minister gently led her back to the door of the sick-room. Maybe he was pondering unconsciously on the change which had been wrought in this wayward young creature since that night when his beloved Allan had first brought her to his door as his promised wife. There was a ray of gladness in remembering that even now in this hour of his great affliction.

On his entering the room below before quitting the house for a short time, he was accosted by Lloyd, who was waiting to hear about the state of his brother.

„He is very low, poor boy, very low; we can hardly expect him to recover — but still, while there is life there is hope. Go up to see him, Lloyd — his eyes do not see any one now,” he added with a sigh.

Chapter XV.

A Friendly Offer.

Lloyd Grahams face was very unprepossessingly grim all during this period of his brothers illness. It gradually had waxed more grim as he sat in his office, or lowered in a corner of the omnibus, or pervaded the streets round the Exchange. For friends initiated into the intimacies of his mute concern he might serve as a sort of barometer or thermometer, telling how the quicksilver of hope was falling or rising at Allans house. Having gone down to the uttermost pit of taciturnity and gruffness for about a week, this wandering weather-glass seemed at last to proclaim altered news to those who met it in the street. A slight relief crept into the sternly-knitted features, the gait appeared less obstinately regular, his casual salutations seemed not to be forbidding so morosely an added remark.

The victory of life was declaring then in Allan no doubt. Slowly the waning tide had set in to return, restoring sight to his offuscated orbs, reasonable expression to his dried lips. The cautious thawing of Lloyds features shows, that hope but with tottering steps is regaining her place — you may read there day by day how exceeding weakness is fettering the patients every limb, how the symptoms sent to retirade are catching at him still, how every small accident or irregularity is a new fear and a redoubled care.

Immense, overwhelming was the joy of the watchers by the sick-bed, when Allan woke from his terrible, under-hand-working sleep. But enough of wasting anxiety was there yet to follow after that lifting of a crushing weight from their minds. The coaxing back of estranged health is a long and tedious task.

Allan, although the noblest of men was not the most amiable of convalescents either. However much the patience possessed by Dianas husband on a great scale, he evinced but ordinary measure on a small one. A sick man is never quite himself, and Allans sanguine temperament was just the one to fidget and itch under all the minute irritations incumbent upon a protracted invalid state. Diana had a better chance than ever during the moments of highest-wrought threatening that were past, to prove the fair devotion of her nature, the exalting power of her love. The constraint she exercised over the wilfulness and pertness of her original manner was a beautiful result to observe of the impressions that had operated upon her, the severe trial of affliction and the one starting spark of joy where night was merging into dawn. The dexterity of her active hands, the cheerfulness of her imperturbable temper was a constant thanksgiving to God for that one sublime hour of her husbands return to life. What a sweet companion she was at his side and how she had her reward from his fond acknowledgement between those little squalls and squabbles thrown up by his peevish fever-humor!

Long confined to and weary of the narrow scene of his illness, Allan was glad to creep feebly down at last, leaning for support on his brave young wife, to the homely old sitting-room. Vacated for many weeks by the spirits of domestic enjoyment, the parlor soon warmed into double cosyness with the humming teurn and the clink of spoons and plates. Scarcely realizing yet how long it was since he had not tasted these tranquil comforts, the master of the house reclined pale and languid, watching his patient attendant and musing upon many things. Earthly purposes and earthly anxieties, once put back already as into the gulf of death, were returning to him, and teasing him in his as yet exhausted state.

Ethel had left for Coketown already some time ago, having stopped at her mothers some days on her retreat, to air herself as it were after her devoted nursing. In Coketown she threw her arms with all the wilder fondness around little Grace, as her heart was even hardened anew towards her husband.

„Not death itself has softened his haughtiness to do honor to the best man he knows, by evincing some compunctions feeling,” she said to herself. „He has stood aloof to see Allan die and his sister mourn over him without recognizing that he has a part in that event. He once has called himself my brothers friend, and he who would not be Allans friend hy his death-bed has been kept back by his own fault.

Richard had returned a clearly declining answer to the first letter of his wife from Liverpool. In a few conventional words of condolence he assumed the attitude of a stranger to the concerns it ran upon. Did he refuse that sacred request of a prayer for the life of his wifes brother? Richard was not a religious man, not although he had a pew in the best Coketown-church and made a point of having it occupied every Sunday by his family and his domestics for the satisfaction of the distinguished community. He was church-warden and something or other too in strength of his Christian aristocracy, but he was not religious, nor cared to be in deference to his enlightened endowments. The feasibility of help Ethel had expressly confined to the Almighty, so his generosity was spared the danger of embezzling itself with his prejudice. Any natural yearning towards that moribund connexion of his was drowned and stiff in his sullen antipathy to the man who had married his renounced betrothed, whom he contemptuously saw placed in opposition to himself by his presumptive consort and against whom he had all a puny mans grievances before a grand one.

Thus he had broken another link where he might have turned a key in the lock of the chain. He had settled in the uncomplete fashion of his alliance with Ethel, sure and contented not to lose any outward prestige and dignity, losing the last clinging fibres of his wifes affection with heedless indifference. It was the downward course human relations are so often running, allowed to run while even stern hearts are so prone to accept a compromise after disappointments that can be redressed, ay, by the grace of the Creators hopeful laws.

And Ethel remorselessly went the path her husband had trodden for her, stamping it with the footmarks of justice as she deemed. Frozen to forgiveness by his crowning coldness, the ultimatum of Richards opinion about her family affairs, she brought out an independant individuality to shame him.

Ethel had taken an angry pleasure in lauding Allans faithful wife in her latter epistles. Being inclined by purer sentiments to receive Diana into her good graces, she was urged on in her kindly disposition by a wicked antagony to her husband to draw closer her relations with her reformed sister-in-law. Two great conquests had been effected during the epoch of Allans peril: Ethels pride had bent to embrace Diana with a protecting, sisterly attachment, Dianas pride had bowed to suffer herself to be so protected by a lady of conscious spiritual superiority. Great as was Mrs. Lansdales concession, young Mrs. Grahams was perhaps the greater after all, and certainly won to greater purpose for those lovely home-ties to which she took the benefit.

No flowers of sweetness grew in the garden of Richard and Ethel any more. Blossoms might have opened and scented, if Richard had given in to the moment that shook the souls of Allan Grahams friends. Flowers might have scented still, if Ethel had not yielded to the wants in her

husbands bearing, by finding it good justice that every plant should die under the weeds that hid and suffocated it. Solemn contrast of those two households, the one rising out of defeat, of perdition, of misery to a blessed lot, the other firm on grounds of credit, honorability and consequence, too much jammed in by arrogance to give even the well-meant promise of an alteration for improvement! Could Ethel have bettered her disjointed destiny by a toiling perseverance like Allans, or is it absolutely so much more impossible to cure self-satisfied decency than abandoned perversity?"

When Allan had descended several times to the tea-table down-stairs, it was at last agreed between the family that they would all come one afternoon and make a little feast of it in honor of his convalescence.

Maud was the first of the guests, coming in upon the appointed day, while her brother was as yet sitting by the open window inhaling the bland summer-air. It was her ambition to prove herself the most zealous now, as her husband had warned her off from too free an attendance at the fever-patients house during the height of the illness. Personally timid to overstep her bounds on account of her chubby little ones at home, Mrs. Adams had vented her sisterly concern in sundry remittances of good and useful things to Diana, by dint of which she at least partly relieved her affectionate eagerness. Mr. Adams was at all events not an unapt personage to indicate to his anxious little woman how and where she might make herself of service, having the habit in fact of poking about in any accessible places to find out the way for small material assistance beside the lofty spiritual one which it was his office to give.

As casualties happen, Mr. Rosen dropped in ten minutes later and thrust himself with complimentary excuses upon the impending tea-party. Sitting down by the invalid

opposite the window, that unchanged friend of yore chatted cheerfully as one prefers to do with convalescents, not badly assisted by his mirthful old pet Mrs. Maud. Finally it came to the point that the elder visitor said:

„What your require now, Mr. Graham, is change of air. It's all very well that you got over the fever and that the poison is being taken out of your blood, but people who have had such an attack must have change of air and scene to fill in their former spirits and vigor again."

„Ah, Mr. Rosen, this sort of fever is nothing so extraordinary to me and people shake it off quietly in these parts. Change of air may perform the task with better energy, but time and patience also does it here."

„Not thoroughly. I cannot believe that you will vanquish this weakness, this enervation, this proneness to relapses and new infections perhaps, without having thoroughly restored your faculties in a removed region I say, going down to Mr. Kenyons shop again in some imperfect state of recovery, you'll be pallid and drooping for years to come, you'll never regain a constitution, you'll — —. No. It is not luxury, it is not indulgence, it is simple prudence for you to take a change of air. It's a duty of yours towards those for whom you would spare yourself and your energies."

„My dear Mr. Rosen, do you really imagine for a moment that it is in my choice to take this sanitary step? Do you fancy that we are so far ahead of the other fever-patients around here, that their apothecary should remotely think of hieing to a health-resort?"

„I do, sir. I put this step for your cure to you as a duty as soon as it is not utterly impossible, and with the friends you possess it is just the height of possible. To tell you frankly, I came here this afternoon to see you and your wife and put my counsel and proposal under

your consideration. Do you deny that I am your friend, Mr Graham? Then a friend can make you a reasonable offer without offending you —."

"I understand you, sir," cried Allan. "No, no, this is really no urgent case, as you take it, to come to my aid with your open hand. You can make me any offer you will without offending me, on the contrary, making me feel bound to you with deeper recognition to your high-minded friendship than if I accepted the most prodigal gifts from you. But spare me the regret of refusing you, if I comprehend aright the leaning of your speech. Let me thank you instead for the sympathy you have preserved for me during all these years — all these years."

"You have not understood me, not quite" rejoined the cotton-merchant, whether with diplomatic laxity of truth or really with no silent changing of tactic is difficult to say. "It is rather a favor I am asking of you, because I cannot bear to see things stand useless, least, when I have hit on a capital way to make them serve. You know that I was for staying all through the summer at Rhyl, to the end of September indeed, as I take business very easy now. I must inform you that ever since my daughters marriage I'm winding up my affairs, with the intention of retiring from business to enjoy still a good meed of a green old age. The relinquishing of my firm into the hands of my successor is imminent now. You see that it is almost a parting mark of friendship I would agree with you about. For my daughters husband, who it appears has brought no very hardy constitution home from his campaigns, has settled on the isle of Wight and I shall take up my abode at Ventnor too, near them. So my daughter urges me to have a look at the isle of Wight this year with this fine sun upon the water of the Channel and I shall abandon my lease at Rhyl to obey her pleadings. Now I would long of course, Mr. Graham,

to take you with me to Ventnor and put you along with me into some private lodgings on trial — it would astonish Mrs. Melville and yet show her her fathers resolved independency for future cases — but as I know you'll never listen to that, you must at least take up with poor Rhyl and fill those empty rooms of mine."

During Mr. Rosens exposition, Allans uncle had stepped in and after the respective salutations become a quiet auditor to the proposal.

„The isle of Wight would be a better climate for you, but Rhyl is exceedingly bright and breezy, with a lovely stretch of sands for easy walks. You see, Mr. Graham, that I claim no great concessions from your scrupulosity, but only the accedence to supply some vacated rooms with a lodger. I never would attempt more with you, as I have experimented full clearly enough how averse you are to anything like friendly obligations.”

„Oh Mr. Rosen is right, Allan!” cried Mrs. Adams.

„Change of air is what you want sorely and do accept it, brother, surely you may accept the offer.”

But Allans susceptibility was pained by a ring in Mr. Rosens concluding sentence, which had something as of hurt and past mortification in it. He stretched out his languid hand towards the German, saying: „Have you never found me justified, sir, when I wished to help myself with my own means and did not aspire to any more promising situation, particulary after I felt it my task to redeem myself before my inner respect and that of such like you in a humble way? Do you reproach me with narrowness, or false pride, or any unworthy sentiment?”

„I don't know whether to blame you or not, though never with a more unworthy sentiment than mistaken nobleness. I have made you repeated offers and propositions which I thought you might well have accepted for your advantage and my gratification. But we won't talk

about it any more, as the fortune you have carved out for yourself is so very satisfactory a one, modest as it looks. I have come down to such simple things now, as to the question of these lodgings in Rhyll — what do you answer to it?"

"That it would really pain me, dear friend, if I should be obliged to hold back again. But in the first instance, although I would gladly fall upon your generosity for necessity, it behoves me not to do so for mere pleasure. To poor people recovering from fevers, change of air has never been granted to be a necessity."

"It's next door to it" chimed in Diana, who had hitherto let the gentleman make out the preliminaries among themselves. "It's the rule that rich people do more than they need and poor people less than they need. If you can, have a change of air, Ally, and say its a God-send."

Allan turned to Mr. Rosen pointing to her and said in a low voice: "Leave her? She has tended me out of this illness up to this stage and she'll do the rest like-wise, I trust to that."

"Why you take you wife with you, Mr. Graham. Obey your womanfolks, they are more sensible than you are yourself, Mrs. Diana and Mrs. Adams there. Not a jot changed, Mrs. Adams, since I first made her acquaintance after that night of the rescue. The sensiblest as the least difficult of you all, Allan Graham."

"I can't take a holiday, Mr. Rosen. My good friend Mr. Kenyon has been keeping up the business for me all during these weeks and I am bound to take it into my hand again as soon as ever I can creep down the street and roll pills once more. Thank you for falling on so delicate a device to procure me a benefit, but I really have too pressing calls upon my attendance here."

"And glad of them as an escape from accepting a jot of another mans bounty," exclaimed Mr. Rosen fretfully.

„You'll overexert yourself at once to make matters worse than ever they were. Now hear me, Mr. Graham. Have you ever taken delight, have you ever been sincerely content to do a fellow-being, poor or rich, a favor? Do you find it pleasant and natural to lend assistance anywhere and how you can, where nothing but a kindly acknowledgement thanks you or repays you? Have you never done what one calls a service to a neighbor poorer than you?"

„Oh maybe occasionally."

„Well, sir, if you have tasted that pleasure for yourself, if you have indulged that agreeable inclination, then don't make yourself undeserving of its being conceded to you many times again by denying that same gratification to one who applies to you. That's the simple ground on which I base my request, independent of necessity and scruples and rubbish."

Mr. Clare spontaneously threw in his interference at this point. He rose from his arm-chair in the corner and walking up to the debating party said to his nephew: „Now that's enough, Allan. You go to Rhyl on as good a reason as ever you had to do anything." Then turning to Allans well-wisher he went on: „We all have to thank you, Mr. Rosen, for your kind forethought. Over and above the reasons he has brought forward my nephew has an undefined hesitation to avail himself of anything that may put him into advantage compared to people who form the majority of his surroundings. Don't judge it foolish lothness against obligation that has made you plead so hard in your generous persistency. It's health you would give him, sir, how shall we thank you, but by holding Allans best powers these following years your gift? There's no sincerer gratitude I know of; for surely it's but too often that our poor men here drag on an endless period of convalescence by never getting wholly out of a fever before they tax

their weakened capacities anew for a wretched sustenance. God bless him a thousand times who thinks of doing so great a service — as a friend."

"But Mr. Kenyon still must be considered before — —" Allan added in his unwavering regard of incumbencies.

"By all means, there he is just going across the street with a lady, his good lady, I doubt not, on his arm," returned Mr. Rosen with a sly smile.

Was Mr. Kenyon the man to aid or to harm his scheme? How the good old gentleman worked himself into fire and enthusiasm when he was apprized of the plan on hand. Should he not himself have prescribed change of air as a druggist and all but surgeon, if he had not deemed he might as well recommend Allan the seasons of the moon?

— Trouble to himself?

"Mr. Graham, if I hadn't had the old business about my ears that time of your danger, me and Mrs. Kenyon would have gone melancholy mad together, I fear, as our servant-girls say they do with us at all times. Don't I love the old business, Graham, and am only resigned to rest myself because my wife prefers it and you are in it? Mr. Rosen, Mr. Clare, it's a perfect arrangement."

Diana it was clear had confidently expected this result of the whole debate. When all was settled she came over to Mr. Rosens chair and thanked him, more with her beaming face than her ordinary so fluent tongue. That fair head above the grey one lifted to it with the benevolent fatherliness of an elder friend — forgotten by him, what she recollects that very moment with stinging intentness: how that venerable form had lain on the pavement under the ruthless hands of Thomas Larkes.

The rest of the company were dropping in by and by, Mrs. Graham, Mr. Moffat, Sidney Adams, set at liberty for pleasure a little later than his wife. Dianas father was clean swept out of the bustling housewives mind, as the

tea-table was to be put to rights and the number of guests somehow to be reconciled to the smallness of the parlor. Lucky it was indeed, that honest Martha had volunteered her presence in the kitchen regions and had thoughtfully assumed the responsibility of seeing the buttered toast up warm and the bacon frizzled to the right degree by Mrs. Grahams inexpert little baby of a maid. Uncle Arthurs Martha permanently meant well by Diana Graham, and fortunately her respect for that young womans husband swallowed up any advertence on that grim matrons part to the fact of Mrs. Allans relation toiling away a graceless convicts life. Not to Diana herself would she have forgiven the mention of an accident so awkward and humbling for her dear young master. Only she herself knew, good Martha, what forbearance her delicate honesty exercised in her considerate treatment of „young masters’ wife.”

Would not many a man shrink from such forbearance rummaging in his back-kitchen? Would Allan have relished that good intent? Better that he saw not all that microscopic rubbish of notions, but better still, that it would not have shaken him, if he had come to know of this trespass upon a mans pride.

Diana was making a first-rate tea-table of it the while and preparing the luscious beverage with a consummate housewifes feeling of consequence. There was not much humility in her at that moment. She was buoyed up with pleasure and diligence and conscious aptness for the diverse tasks required of her. She had gone on in her delight about the ventilated plan to ask Mr. Rosen for details about Rhyl and talk about travel as much as she knew of the subject from hearsay. Interrupting her rattling discourse in the height of her domestic preoccupation, the theme caught hold of her again the moment she began pouring out the tea. Allan remained in his invalids chair by the window and Mr Rosen kept him company at that

cheerful seat. Diana was handing the cups round and had lured the attention of her guests to the dainty dish of potted shrimps in the middle of the table when suddenly the little demon that twitched her occasionally, spoke out:

„I know the person whose task it would have been to come here during Mr. Grahams illness, and never did — his brother-in-law of Coketown.”

A dumb pause.

„If he thinks himself too good for us, surely he should not think himself too good for Allan, and he needn't have minded me at such a pass.”

„Too good for you?” exclaimed Mr. Rosen, letting the tea-cup stop between the saucer and his lip. He could not consent to have his favorite Richard taxed with common arrogance towards Allan, nor could he fancy in him any but his own chivalrous instinct towards a decently married woman, let alone her extraction and other accruing circumstances. „My dear Mrs. Graham, how come you by such an idea?”

„By plain fact, Mr. Rosen. Ask my husband if you don't believe me. Though I wonder that you hesitate to do so.”

Mrs Allan did not look towards her husband, she did not see that expression of deep pain and embarrassment on his face — she was busy at the table. Mr. Rosen looked harmlessly into his hosts countenance, in involuntary obedience to the ladys suggestion.

Allan felt himself constrained to give response, he nodded slightly, saying: „I suppose it is the truth —” rummaging his brain the while for an adroit remark to turn the conversation off its course. But as is often the case, the required help in need was so slow to be found that Diana had time to plunge in anew, without preposterous hurry either.

„A brother-in-law of such opulence might have done something handsome, don't you think so, Mr. Rosen? Mr.

Lansdale might verily have come here when God only knew that my husband was not going to die. Mr. Adams came to the house twice, sometimes three times a day and often bit his lip not to cry along with us women, I am certain. That's something like human relations, sir, God bless him. But that man of sympathy and soft-heartedness and mercifulness, he'll make tender with strangers maybe, but he'll stop away where it doesn't please him to come."

„Has Mr. Lansdale really not been here during this tribulation of yours?" Mr. Rosen demanded in amazement.

„Never even sent one word to ask after Mr. Graham. Never a remembrance or a token of caring a bit about it all. That's not a misunderstanding, is it, Mr. Rosen, that's relentless animosity until death and for no reason at all — —"

„Diana!" Allan had gathered his voice into one peremptory enjoinder, as there was no interrupting the flow of his wifes sentences. She was struck dumb on the spot, obedient as she was now, though wilful ever if anywhere left loose. Mr. Rosen quickly perceived the pending awkwardness and helped the whole party across the vexation by his own agile effort. His gentlemanly versatility was such that soon the discomposure caused by the untoward subject was effaced as though it never had been there. Asking Mrs. Graham after his good friend Lloyd he launched them all into Scotland, whereto that comfortable family had repaired, relieved from the unreckoned-for apprehensions about Allan. Gwendoline was one of those ladies, who are regarded as sallow up to the season of pleasure-trips and found exceedingly rosy and pink after it. Bertie, the one-time baby, had worn off his hideousness and his roundness together in a fashion, that one really might wish the Highland air to add something to his contours. Diana did not refer to Rhyl any more, she was probably ashamed or at least shy of the theme which

she had conducted to the brink of a formidable deterioration in the festive spirits conjured. Only at the hour of the general up-break, all the members of the assembly chimed into more or less explicit thanks for Mr. Rosens deed of friendship. Maud reverted to the subject in her pretty, candid way and her husband could not stand silently by.

„He'll come back a new man from that fresh bathing-place" Mr. Adams observed, „and I'm glad for my sister-in-laws sake too. She has strained her health not a little either, this latter time, your favor is entire by making it apply to them both at once. Sometimes the nurse is quite put away behind the patient."

Turning with a smile from Mr. Rosen to his hostess, the latter on tiptoe whispered in his ear: „And it were better she could hide away anywhere, for she has been very unworthy of a nurse this evening. You've forgiven and forgotten, Mr. Adams, have you? Then I'm worrying and remembering. Shake hands, brother-in-law."

He even stooped forward and kissed her slightly on the brow. She had never yielded to any of his deeply-considered lectures and injunctions, she had never bowed her unyoked neck to the orthodox and virtuous preacher. She had chatted and trifled with Maud to the limits which he would allow, but that serious and emulous man had never heard an earnest word from Diana, and during Allans illness been so strange to her yet that he had got but a visitors glimpse of her. Those blue eyes delighting -him so much with their expression this moment, had seen however, and taken note. Listen to his lessons she would not, but see the footprints of an appreciable, upright character, of a soul pure and gentle as a womans, the lover of little children and of simple, natural men, she was ripe for that, opening for that even in the lawless slums of her anterior corruption. Oh the true dogma of Christ-

ianity is judged after where all the added dogmas are never held; nor will never be held maybe!

Orthodoxy or no orthodoxy however, Mr. Adams must admit that it is in a great number of people a hard prescript to be good. As it was an all but impossible task to make Mrs. Maud come up to her obligations according to his rules, no wonder that Diana faltered in satisfying the much more general duties assigned to her.

But perhaps Mr. Adams resolved to keep all his home-sermons to himself, when he was told by his young relation that she was going over all her superannuated faults of her own accord just then.

That was more hopeful at least than seeing Mr. Lansdale have the choice of every new-fangled understanding of Christian religion.

Richard was sadly puzzling Mr. Rosen on his way from the tea-party. The cotton-merchants reflections reverted to him instantly upon having made his adieux from the ring of hearty, loving people. Had Richard not often spoken to him in days of yore in the sense of being a friend to Allan Graham? Had he not manifested the unbiassed allegiance of such on that night of terrible memory in his billiard-room? Had Mr. Rosen not gazed on him approvingly and said: „That's a true man. A comrade who understands misfortune?“

They were apart now. By dint of a misunderstanding?

Diana had hit the problem there, a misunderstanding cannot interfere at a farewell for life. Some culpability, some freezing of the space allotted to a friend in the heart? Then on whose side was it? Not on Allan Grahams, not on Allans, no.

Mr. Rosen dived into the attempt of finding a motive for the estrangement between the two companions during the rescue of his life. The man whose sentiments so prodigally favored Richard Lansdale and never departed

from their first effusive gratitude, stopped bewildered before grasping the solution. He came no farther than to repeat: „There is an injustice to Mr. Graham in this, I wish I could clear it up.”

For there is a place given to Allan in his elder friends silent esteem, which he cannot make extensive to both at once. Mr. Rosen has decided: „It is not Mr. Grahams fault that has wrought this unrelaxing division, whatever it be.” The open side of the question is left to Richard Lansdale.

However great one may please to rate the latters virtues and however small his deficiencies, there are places into which he cannot penetrate, the sanctuary of utmost confidence, which are a better mans than he is.

Chapter XVI.

Father and Daughter.

Flags were waving, garlands wreathed from pole to pole, and a band of musicians ready to strike up „God save the Queen.” A bran-new edifice of brick and mortar stood on a healthy, elevated site on the outskirts of Coketown, in its own grounds, a big building strong enough to be a fortress, ornamental enough to be a liberal lords manor-house and regular enough to be a public institution. It was the inauguration-day of Mr. Lansdales New Popular Boarding-School.

A beneficent scheme of Richard Lansdales, last years Mayor of Coketown. The magnates of the city assisted at the ceremony, the best families of the locality were present, the numbers of the curious uncounted. This work of charity was erected at Mr. Lansdales private cost. The wealthy citizen, who ever had his hands full of public

subscriptions, who never tired of lending his aid and planning for the public good, had given his *chef d'oeuvre* to the world. As President of the Society for Amelioration of Distress he had studied the educational wants and requirements of the place and made the acquaintance of a humanitarian professor, Mr. Starch, who went about with wonderful ideas relating to the betterment of society, all lying useless for lack of means.

There's an address in Mr. Lansdales pocket, which will expatiate no doubt upon the vast ideals of such inspired philanthropists as the excellent magistrate and the scientific professor. Can it cast a swerving look, this address, in becoming modesty, upon the past exertions of Mr. Lansdale, how he seconded every vote in favor of educational progress throughout the country, while he sat for the borough in Parliament, how he availed himself of his influence, being Mayor of the town, to reanimate all pending schemes for general improvement, and how his head was as much occupied by his beneficent pursuits as his hands busy in giving the example of liberality?

It may, for Alderman Lansdale is a model of a public character, and a model must bear deference to its design and show up before his fellow-beings emulation. He must point to this or that achievement, to fire the spirits of his hearers, his deeds and acts belong to the world and before the eyes of the world he must let them play, to have them germ and blossom and bear fruit.

How he stands there now at the principal entrance, the great man, smiling always, as though he had done nothing and were only enjoying the kindness of his admirers. He looks the perfection of manhood at his age, not mentioning a slight leaning to stoutness which has set in of late, consequent upon the comfortableness of his life and the case of his conscience, no doubt. His family is with him,

he has the Leas of Richmond on a visit at his house too, these make a resplendant group of it in the centre.

Grace is near eighteen years of age now, the petted child of the Coketown' elite. She is a lovely girl and vain, to be seen at a glance in her dress, of the vanity which is pretty, of course, which but serves to complete the image of a very artless, giddy, captivating missy in her teens. She is not as tall as her mother, there is much more movement in her than ever that lady thought of in her youngest days, movement that makes one whisper her name before she is introduced as claiming the title by baptismal right. Every ones darling, darling of him who beholds you for the first time, darling of rich and poor, do I greet you as your mothers comfort, as your fathers conciliating angel?

It could not be hidden, how she was Richards Lansdales idol, too many have divined perhaps how from the marble beauty of his wife the fathers ardor has glided off to all but drown young Grace in his parental passion of love, his only, his charming child. The old luck never once faithless to Richard Lansdale; making concession to Ethels coldness, he called the grandest lady of Coketown his, while the unsatisfied yearnings of tenderness in his nature had this sweet object to develop the most unprecedented sublimity of affection.

But Mrs. Lansdale — what is the mothers share of Gods blessing on conjugal union? One sees at a glimpse that Grace is not made to fulfil serious, voluntary missions upon earth, that she yields like the flowers the utmost delight without intent and self-exertion.

Mrs. Lansdale is just speaking to her daughter. A glance at their mode of intercourse and exchange of looks may unravel the story of years, of those many years during which the child grew, evenly, imperceptibly to those who were near her, while to the long-absent she sets her baby-

form to flight with the great change of girlhood unfolded before him. Of course there is latent love in Ethel's breath, of course there are invisible fibres going from heart to heart between the two, but there is something more exceptional, more intimate, of which Ethel dreamt beside the cradle of Grace — and that is not there. No, even less relations exist between that self-possessed lady and yon careless child than between many a mother and daughter, something strange is there, but hard and chill, belonging to Mrs. Lansdale's disappointments. Grace is her father's darling and her father's child.

Education would not make Grace other than she was. The education she received was not a spring of pleasure in the Lansdale home. Richards' impersonification of love was luxurious indulgence, Ethel's was principle and method. Grace's father would lavish all gifts and devices of wealth upon her, vain to heap her with infinite extravagancies where he was warned not to pamper her childish taste. Ethel would hold her back from too early amusements and too prodigal indulgences wherever she could, opposing her husband's exaggerations to the discomfiture of the little lady herself. As it turned out in the end, Grace could not be oversatiated with enjoyment and frippery and glitter, far from becoming blasé, she could never drain the cup of her innate, harmless, frivolity, and Richard held himself corroborated against the educational counsels of his wife. Yet Ethel felt herself firmly, although disarmed, in the right. A child is better accustomed to woollen frocks than to silk habits, better left to dream of many things than to know and possess them, better reduced to its primitive facility of enjoyment than gorged with grown-up people's refined inventions of pastime. No service is done to the buds of mankind by rearing them upon an elegance whose art-merits they cannot appreciate, yet which is destined to form the rudimental standard of their later views of

existence. It is easy for any one to step on into growing luxury if opportunity offer, but difficult to simplify an injudiciously fostered taste. Not even lucky Richards daughter so sure in her position, but that her mothers hand had not better been left to steady her for any aspect of fortune, probable or improbable to supervene. Mr. Lansdale senior has faded from the stage of life during the intervening lapse of time. Old and young, at every age those who were our friends and acquaintances have softly retired from their former places and are seen no more, as happens when one returns to an old scene after a lengthened interval. Anne Lansdale, the delicate, the young, has a grave in St. Martins Churchyard, by her fathers side. Mr. Moffats agitated spirit reposes, thus believes the slab on a green tomb in Smithdown Cemetery L'pool. Mrs. Graham has smiled her last upon her children and grandchildren, and the old home in Kingstreet is tenanted by strangers. They live on, those two however, it may well be imagined, in vivid remembrance. The artists violin is kept in Allans house, dumb with the death of its master, yet with all its old tunes in its strings. There is one being especially united to Alexander Moffats memory, of whom Diana Graham has hoped that one day he should be inspired to wake that loved instrument again. The violinists god-child, Allans son. But such sweet fancies, the hearts poetry, will so often not be realized by destiny. The boy is twelve now and shows no spark of Mr. Moffats flame. All the rosier and merrier he is for that, as though he had become a lark instead of a nightingale.

„A lark?” cries Diana, when happy Allan makes the simile. „A greenfinch, sir, nothing more but a greenfinch!”

He was given late to his parents, after they had long led their matrimonial life contentedly alone. The more unspeakable the joy, when that little creature of hope and

love lay in Dianas arms and Allan stood beside her, the two consulting over the name it should bear.

„I want him to have his fathers name,” Diana said, thinking to transfer with it upon her son the halo as of infallible goodness which she had secretly cast around her husband.

„Not my name, no” Allan replied, „a friends dear name —.”

„Mr. Moffats? Yes, I'll like that too. It's well thought of you, Al; it will be a pleasant surprise to him too, now won't it? But he might be called after uncle Arthur also, they are quite alike those two in the degree that they are near and dear to us both. Allan would be only my name for him of course. If you don't want that, it must be Arthur or Alexander, I'm sure.”

„Or Arthur Alexander in one, not so, love?”

And Arthur Alexander he became, Allan and Dianas boy, to inherit under Gods will his godfathers cherished virtues and amiable qualities. Mr. Moffat made him his pet, his friend from his first infant tottering and gambolling, the prime joy shed on the home, which the lonely, peculiar man came half to share in those latter years. Arthur Alexander broke him a string of his violin once, but the music-master was not wroth to string another on again. Mr. Moffat was in the habit of calling him his little friend. „And papa is your great friend?” asked the child one day. „So he is, my boy,” cried the artist, „and as you grow you will be my great friend too.”

Michael Lansdales honored memory was almost darkened by the splendid magnanimousness of his youngest son. Who thinks yet of that unpresuming, active figure that once took the lead in many a Coketown public occasion, while all eyes are riveted on the exalted Richard Lansdale? Ah change, inevitable change after fifteen years. Many might be in their old places yet, still they are not, for fate is always singling out her marked persons here

and there and leaves no ancient order untouched for any length of time. It would scarcely seem like life, if those past years had not been active in some gently regretful way.

Mr. Lansdale of the present had commenced his address meanwhile. A short sermon had been spoken by the Dean of St. Martins, Richard especial friend and coadjutor, in the chapel of the Childrens Home. Grace had gone to adorn it with garlands and flowers, the day before, taking a young ladys part in her fathers enterprise. A group of queerlooking damsels was intentionally conspicuous in the secular orators audience. It had been spoken at by the Dean, and would naturally be harangued too with on uncious exhortation at the end of Mr. Lansdales speech. They were the standing inmates of the New Home, girls in a prodigious uniform habit, such as are invented for the commodity of charity children. Blue was their color, with white aprons and white caps. The gowns were a success, so far as they made every girl seem demure and without any individual opinion of her own.

The silk and satin flutter of the benign assistants, the creaking of lacquered boots and management of golden-headed canes has settled down into the pause of intense listening which is only prepared, not imposed by the opening sentences of the speaker. Richard takes account of this rule and arrives at the weighty and meaning phrases only at the second period of his discourse. Here he comes up at the best-balanced tenor of his voice and the first impressive slackening of intonation:

„Coketown is provided in every branch of humanitarian institutions and centres for popular advancement. Our city may range with the foremost of Great Britain and of Europe, if that is saying more, as regards the care it bestows on poor and distressed, the asylums, refuges schools, churches it has erected, tending to raise the moral and material situation of the masses. Coketown has a

Home for Homeless Children, a House for Orphans, a Foundling Hospital, a Refuge for Homeless Women, a Workmans Aid Association, innumerable memberships who make special forms and classes of distress their study and care, hospitals for the different sections of diseases and diseased. I may say that no man need starve, and no soul be lost in Coketown, thanks to the eminently humane and exquisitely cultured disposition of our local society. Having often taken the direction of a public subscription myself, I have had as many occasions to note the philanthropic spirit, truly worthy of this nineteenth century, which animates my respected fellow-citizens. Whenever you have honored me with your confidence by placing me on some influential post, I have tried to requite that confidence by inverting my powers in the works of your large-minded benevolence. As President of the Society for Amelioration of Distress I have originated the idea of food-distributions to the poorest of the poor on an extensive and a regular scale. The system is, I believe, the ulterior reliance and repeal from desperation to many an unfortunate family. The strangers who come to this manufacturing district are not allowed to perish in the disappointment of their honest hopes. Being a member of the municipal authority, the efforts for the prevention of vice are likewise brought near to me as a consideration of signal importance. My whole experience derived from my official career and my participation in charitable schemes tends to point out a soundly calculated method of education as the principal lever for the purification of our populace. Upon this understanding several gentlemen related to myself by similitude of ideas and purposes have labored to foster and implant higher knowledge and above all love of knowledge in the quick and clear-brained factory people. We have arrived by common exertion at the necessity of opening popular lecturing-halls, and pro-

viding resorts of popular recreation to an extent which it might give us just pride to point out to any visitor of our town. For those pleasure-grounds, those gymnastic establishments, those evening schools evidence the course which the taste of our proletary classes is taking, thanks to the impulse given by the munificence, the enlightened aspirations from above. You will remember the dispute we upheld about dedicating the space cleared by the demolition of poor dwelling-houses to the erection of a General Library and a National Museum, with public promenades adjoining.

But the actual focus of our endeavors and objects, the place where all training and educational designs display their full force and are probable to yield their vastest benefit is unquestionably in the proper and assiduous schooling of the young. As Coketown possesses already the ordinary institutions of this kind, it only remains to keep it on the level of contemporary humanitarian progress, by introducing immediately every modern improvement and reform. To support and continue this advanced endeavor and desirability I have founded this New Popular Boarding School.

Although a Childrens Home or Asylum according to the statutes laid down and the room prepared for constant pensioners, to be reared at the sole expense of the school, it has an external department, which is desired to serve for the children of poor factory laborers, whose parents often have neither wish nor money to attend with on the exigencies of a good fundamental training of the rising population.

The application and earnestness of my friend M. Starch, the Director of the School, furnishes the guarantee, that the new institute will maintain its mission of pursuing every noteworthy European innovation and paedagogic discovery with the end of testing its applicability and efficiency in the English training system.

The comportment of the pupils will be strictly watched and rewarded. Virtue is supported and encouraged in every charitable establishment which I am in the direction of by all possible distinction and devisable impulsion. Premiums will not only recompense talent, but plain, honest good-will. . . .

May we not cherish the fancy that the benevolence and philanthropy of our community shall one day arrive at such a concentration of effort that not one less favored fellow-being of ours will have reason to despair, but shall have a tolerable existence pledged to him by ministering society from lodgings gratis to the Old Mans Rest, ere we even send them off to the Eldorado of the Emigration Companies?

How the orator was cheered ere he descended from the platform, how sweet the words were he addressed to the sober little girls in blue, recommending them to Mr. Starch and Mr. Starch to them. The exhortations he gave them about their assiduity and behavior, which was to be rewarded with gold medals. How latent virtue stretched its neck, hearing how Mr. Starchs penetration would draw it forth to resplendent superiority.

The guests then went round and spoke to one or other of the charity-children, the prettiest of course, always the same ones singled out. Afterwards the assembled haute-volée looked on, as dinner was served to the newly inaugurated inmates the Dean saying grace.

Luckily for the enjoyment of the little ones over the fine banquet, the spectators dropped off by and by into their carriages and the New Popular Boarding School was left to itself and its director.

Mrs. Lansdale went in the carriage with the Lees, Richard and his daughter had the brougham to take the party back to the town-house in Feather Row.

They talked of several minor topics those latter two, as

they drove through the streets, objects suggested by a view from the carriage windows or some small thing that was casually in their mind. They did not mention the ceremony just concluded when they had left the new institute behind, occasions like this one were frequent with the Lansdales and they had done with the housed homeless children. Grace had festooned the pillars of the chapel and found all the pupils dears; afterwards each of the assembly had cast a parting glance of admiration on the handsome exterior of the edifice, and really they had done enough then in honor of the celebration.

Other things heaved up in Richards well-studded brain. Pleasant thoughts though, he rested his arm on the swelling cushions of the seat, as he reclined in a corner and gazed at his daughter with a smiling wistful face. Then he softly bent towards her, with a question uttered in a low, half-bantering tone.

„What thinks my Grace of being the daughter of a peer?“

What a flash of mundane joy, instantly irradiated Miss Lansdales countenance! She leant towards her father and whispered, surely with a beating heart:

„Oh it would be delightful, dear papa?“

„You would be my Lady Grace then. You would rank with the daughters of Lord Thousandstone and the Earl of Denagh. I should like to see you the equal in quality of those to whom you are the equal in fortune and fortunes gifts.“

Richard Lansdale was so proud of his child. She was the crowning gem of his vanity. She was the end, the flower of his ambition, casting final glory on his home, an apotheosis of his olympic self, so magically intertwined with his egoism that she was dearer than self. Yes, it was greater felicity to him, having reached the marges of British nobility, that his daughter should be Lady Grace than that he himself should be peer.

He had raised himself to the head of his original class, so as to have the choice of leaving it for more distinguished honors and a more sounding name. A baronetcy had been offered to Richard Lansdale several years before, but old Mr. Lansdales civic pride had counter-operated to preserve all reputation the family won for their own unadulterated sphere. After Mr. Lansdale had added great credit to his fame by the sagacious wielding of his prerogatives of Mayor and, extreme of privileges, had entertained some foreign Majesty or Transparency at his house, Lord Swinton had now whispered broad hints about a peerage to be due to none so chiefly as to the Coketown benefactor. Richard Lansdale was to have his prize-medal for virtue too. He was at present fain to accept the laurel for his daughters sake.

He had disdained the knighthood; what finer feasting for vanity than to take this higher distinction, not for his own gratification, but because Grace longed to possess the pledge of her fathers success?

„Have you spoken to mamma about the subject again?” eagerly demanded Grace, nestling her childish head on Richards shoulder.

„Not yet, my dear. It is your mothers inclination generally to take an opposite view of things to mine. Besides your mamma is more than ordinary out of spirits at present.”

„Ah papa, I know why it is. She is entertaining aunt and uncle here for your pleasure and comparing the while with uncle Allan who is never invited here. I am sure that is always lurking in her thoughts. Mamma has no relish for her hospitality on this account. Dearest papa, I do so love to have everything pleasant and I know you do just the same: why will you never be kind to mammas relations? I remember uncle Allan as such a nice, gentleman, he took me in his arms so fondly — yes, he was

very, very fond of me, I felt that, little girl though I was."

"Confound him and his wife for taking you in their arms. Every clod in the streets who sets eyes on you is fond of you, Grace."

"Ah and I like it from all of them. But it's a natural wish in mamma to desire that her family be not hostilely overlooked by you. Your dissension with uncle Allan must be of very ancient date and surely he has done nothing for a round of years to foster it, papa. And I suppose you do not despise mammas brother, you darling dear"

The petted child subsided into her coaxing tone, for she saw the clouds gathering on her fathers brow. Richards disdain of Ethels relations had deepened into a set animosity more from stubbornness than from anything else perhaps. To maintain the position he had taken up relative to Allan Graham in an access of fury contrary to his wife was to him a matter of course. To hate his brother-in-law for all the disagreements this awkward attitude engendered, was a natural consequence. Richard had held back Grace from her mothers determined intercourse with the Liverpool family as much as he could. The rupture was a thing long taken for granted on both sides and stood in no expectation of any soothing or conciliatory intervention.

"These are very old affairs to talk about," remarked Graces parent with a tired accent in his voice, lying indifferently back in his cushions again.

His daughter silently remarking that the subject was too disagreeable and unfruitful to be pursued, went to recall the smile to his mouth by returning to the more favored theme.

"Papa, is it quite certain that you'd be made Lord if you would? And you could uphold the estate and we might range with the members of the peerage?" "Of course I could do that and as to the certainty of the occasion,

a hint, my dear, is as good as the will that lurks behind it. I'll receive broader hints by and by according to the answers I give. I have replied evasively at first and shall reply evasively two or three times more perhaps; we are coy on both sides, they with the offer and I with its acceptance. But the offer will come, Gracie, if I will allow it."

"Oh dear papa, do let it come. Don't mind mamma, it's all her austerity of principle. She won't dislike it at the bottom. It would be quite a new life for us, wouldn't it? Don't we belong to another region then? I'll always love dear Amy Hall and Rosa Henderson, but won't they think more of me still and would not Lady Laura esteem me her fit companion — — —"

"What's that, Grace?"

"The pain which sometimes shoots into my side since that cold I caught at Cecilius ball," replied Miss Lansdale, looking up with an undimmed smile as a momentary contraction passed away from her frame and features.

"When you are peer, papa, you are among the first of the kingdom and you will be able to work more good than ever you did yet? Mamma can't disapprove of that. For me it's only pleasure, but you, you mean something greater and nobler. How happy I am in you papa! The respect and admiration they all have for you?" the young lady rattled on, quite as vain of her sire, whom she stamped the foremost gentleman of England as she made him by her words.

"The title might give me more consequence in the eyes of my fellow-citizens than even I now possess, and appearance is power, power, with my intent, to profit the community. If the project serves my designs your mother cannot dissuade me. Rest tranquil, little pet, it will all turn out to satisfaction. And in consideration of the Lordship its possible I'll purchase the poor insolvent Marquis of Sheepskins country-house."

Another joy and gleeful expectation, how they planned, those two, as if future were all their own, devised for their delight and aggrandizement! Graces heart was beating, forward towards future, with a happy, overful impatience, her cup of life one draught of luxurious sweetness, of tempting spice. Less did her father strive for his proper desires now, content in the sole gratification that such were Richard Lansdales daughter.

Chapter XVII.

The Family-Budget.

What was Ethels life now, the lonely mistress' of the Feather-Row mansion? Her fate was that proper to more than half of all married people maybe. Perfect harmony between husband and wife is a thing much too precious it seems to be unreservedly squandered by Hymen. Nor are many souls so sordid but that they had never cherished a vision of sacred bliss, which one sees regrettfully dissolve like the airy pictures of a happy dream. Mrs. Lansdale bore her lot as others bear it. She did not pass her days in lament and voluntary repining. She had made up her mind for the contrary, all the rich attributes of the station she had entered were used to animate and ornament her existence, she surrounded herself with the comforts and indulgences of high culture and superior comprehension. The most valuable of new books were her company, music was her supreme diversion, art of all forms kept her ideas brightly engaged. Ethels taste was not disdainful of luxury; had her old love-vision of Richard been granted her in a poor, a bare scene, how quickly would she have exchanged for that the golden palaces of present reality! But as it was she did not show herself so rebellious against the

Ruler of her fortunes as to trample upon the share which was measured out to her in things of clay, yet objects able to be spiritualized into balances of her inner being.

Lonely she was, yes, and solitude never chimes in with true happiness. There were a few persons she liked, among the throng whom she was indifferent to, in Coketown, there were striving spirits whom she made her protégées and numbers of the needy for whom she thought and contrived with active compassion. Her time was replete with occupation and planning, with edifying amusements and with godly pursuits Yet there were not many who loved her, profoundly, yearningly, because she was so shut up in her severe blamelessness, her uncommunicative gravity. No one had a right to interpell her, she performed her duties, social and domestic, she took recreations that were an honor to her character. None more adapted to shed lustre on the Coketown magnates hearth. Ethel knew that Richards feelings were more readily disposed towards her now, than hers to him. A word of weakness, of a faint vestige of her former love would have made him claim her with but too willing warmth. There was no surviving spark of the ancient fire however. One coveted conquest of Richards irresistible personality, the usurpation of his wifes heart, was left to be the forbidden goal of fate. To make that womans opinion surrender to his spell upon his own conditions, Richard had often thought of that. His will should reign, then he might see what graces he would concede to a beloved wife. Then a thousand things tending to complete felicity might have been, which were not for Ethels hardness of temper.

Ethel was not fashioned for the felicity of a passive pet. None of her family had ever seen her splendid état in Coketown, not even Lloyd, when he accompanied Gwendoline on a visit to her fathers. Allans brother lightly gave an excuse for not entering the mansion, which

was too stylish and elegant to admit any of his kindred, save himself.

Gwendoline could not understand her brothers churlishness and occasionally tried to knit together the old associations again by words which nobody listened to.

Since her mothers demise Ethel had visited less frequently in Liverpool than of yore. The liberty of her movements was long vindicated, the most natural call to her native haunts had ceased, the love existing between herself and Allan lived as well in distance as in a personal approach, which always had something forced in it.

Thus Ethels life had become poorer and poorer in the cheerful enjoyment of home-affections ever since she married Richard Lansdale and since Grace grew up into her proper individuality. Her scorn for her husband, which increased with many a minor occasion induced her to be inordinately severe upon the childs clinging to him. A strange jealousy moved her soul as she watched how Richards winning superficiality secured their daughters preference. Grace was no indemnification to her; there was no compensation for what she had lost on her marriage-day in all the wide world. The dearest task of such a mother as she was, the training of her child, was broken by Richards interference and perverted into a subject of discord. At first, Ethel had been possessed by an unshakeable belief that Grace was absolutely and exclusively her property and treasure. She did not question to uphold her system of education at any cost of trouble and opposition to counterworking influences. Her husband quietly ignored her plans. Ethel remonstrated with him. "I shall do as I please with my daughter," Richard said. "She is mine too," Ethel answered him. Richards imperious pace should be checked while attempting the province of a mothers duty, so she haughtily resolved, but the conqueror was victorious again. Ethel was proof against defeat in

her own person alone. With a deeprooting disdain she saw Grace going over to her father, every joy and wealth crowding to the unworthy one, who hid self, bare self, under the mask of fair humanity. Grace could but belong to one of the two, as her parents declined to intend unity. Ethels character did not improve under these conditions. Bitterness gained on her sense of injury, a drop of bitterness in most of her words and actions sealed her wrongs as all the more firmly irreparable. Polite as was Mrs. Lansdales bearing in public, there was an unamiability spreading in the ground-tone of her disposition, which was unconsciously perceived by impartial acquaintances and kept them aloof. Certainly Grace had felt this lurking inclemency too and shrunk from it. Her mother let her go, let all go as it would; hers was not the fault that she should exert herself to change the false position the three were in. Both master and mistress of the Coketown house meant self-containedly to abide by their attitude and rested content with themselves as they were for a full long precedent of years. Is ever an alteration wrought in such miscarriage as this, are relaxations tried to effect it, some bending of the adverse qualities, are disputes raised to foment the thought of an amendment?

Disputes there were, but none devoted to the end of peace. There was the discussion at present about Richards elevation to the peerage.

Mr. Lansdale let fall some hints referring to the impending proposal. Ethel took up the glove as she was ever ready to do in order to place her own code of judgment in counterposition to his.

"What a good thing it would be for Grace," Richard said, leaning against the empty hearth and playing with his watchchain.

"For Grace? How so? Is she not well as she is at present?"

„But how much better still she would be as a lady of higher rank. What a charming acquisition she were for the nobility! Other spheres of access, other standing, other chances. The dear child would be so much happier still."

„It is quite in your course of ideas to think so. Puff her up with a new senseless nihility, that sparkles like a bauble. What is a bauble, Richard? a thing of legitimate-worth and evident ornament, but is it anything for the heart, anything to remember of a shape that vanishes? I have toiled and planned to give Grace a taste for the true, enduring, solid appearances of life, you have come with toys and lured her away. You intend to be such a model man, Richard; what sense does there lie in that title you two are hankering after? Is it a political device? Then what will it avail a young girl like our daughter? Is it only an amusement? How very foolish then. Is it the prize for merits? How I should despise you, my husband, with all your pretensions of generosity, to allow yourself to be paid for your goodness!"

„You would despise me if I accepted the peerage? You always despise me, I believe, my dear."

That he should pronounce this phrase with a conviction of truth to the woman who once loved him best of all on earth! Ethel maintained herself without response. Richard gave her a long look. „Your silence is eloquent, Madam," he said at last with a sneer. An instant pause. „We have vowed at the altar to be husband and wife for better, for worse. It has been for worse."

„For worse indeed. But just as God often causes things to pass. Accidents which would be evaded if we possessed the power of prevision, yet which were not designed to be evaded. Human lots decreed by a Wiser One than we are, against whom we have no right to complain."

„You have drawn the lot of an unhappy wife with me, it seems Ethel?”

„Not of a happy one, you know.”

„Is it a fault of mine? As true as I live I have felt sincere attachment for you, I have given you what a man can give to the partner of his fortunes, I am true to you in the face of your crossness and unamiability. Reproach me with the symptoms of your changeableness, if you find sufficient reason to do so.”

„Richard, I have belonged to you since I can think with a love that was greater than I can describe to you. It was so great, that you could not have strayed into the irregularities of an ordinary man without hurting me, because my imagination was so bound up in your perfection and superiority. You believed in these latter two, and have continued to believe, I did so once and do so no more now. You have hit short of the ideal I made of you. Well, perhaps it was an error of mine to sublimize you so. Yet there exists a man, who fulfilled my high-strained demands on manly worth and exertion, who proved to me that my dreams were no chimera; and that mans dignity you knew not how to honor, over that man you wanted to place yourself with presumption. You have brought sorrow into my intercourse with my poor mother, for your mundane pride, the claims next to my nuptial duties you have trifled with. Whose fault is it that my inner core is torn in two, that I cannot serve the obligations admitted at the altar and my natural feelings at once? Are you not taunting me, in asking if I am happy under these circumstances? Do you expect me to make myself one with you under these conditions?”

Richard still looked at his forefinger wound round with the watch-chain. When Ethel had finished he lifted his eyes by and by, saying: „It is not for Grace's sake alone that I shall accept the lordship, it is in the interest of

my purposes to do so. It suits me to gain more influence, to occupy a more conspicuous place, from whence may radiate my propositions."

„I have asked you what you think of the principle of taking such titles. As to the influence and weight you mean to gain by it, I judge you have enough to do around your without looking out for farther ranges of operation. Your field is quite large enough for one mans force to be given to the husbandry of it."

Ethel saw the laziness with which her husband dropped the more thorough-going discussion she had introduced, she followed him without a remark as he turned back into the former topic. Richard did not care to debate upon discordances which he had long resigned himself to and which he did not intend to propitiate. He did not deign to undergo any trouble in this question of his wifes opinion. He had loved Ethel for her loving him, he despised her for her despising him. In the intimacy of home there was an end to the respective pride and conceit of these two highbred natures, Richards pretensions lost their effect before Ethel, Ethels innate dignity was humiliated by her husbands contemptuousness. Thus often works the insidious demon in a home, feasting upon the foibles and defects of the heart, which are in loosest negligée here. Thus are all attempts at bettermeditated understanding left and the dull habitual course proceeded in to the end of present days.

Ethels mettle was wakened by the slighting indifference shown by Richard, notwithstanding the mute compliance wherewith she received it. So when Mr. Lansdale replied to her last remark: „Allow that a man has more insight into the convenience of such practical points; trust me to know the steps necessary for the furtherance of my own aims," she rejoined with some violence:

„This is certain, Richard, that if you bring this little

home to me, I shall bear it as an irksome burden, as an appendage which I repudiate. I shall be ashamed of the folly that will make Grace wear it with conceitedness, that has made you bespeak it in your hollow ambition. You will take it for your merit, you, who were honored to entertain a continental prince the other year — yes, do your obeisances to princes! Such are your merits, such are the public successes you court. If you had conquered your adverse inspirations to receive another guest, the lordly dignity might sit better on you, and less might you think it requisite to advance your purposes. The world will regard you, the world will see your deeds. I only wish that Grace and I were not obliged to share your honors, your futile honors. Look, you desire to reply, but you don't venture to repeat to me that you are earning a real good for our daughter, or that the abstract sense of the proposition is anything but Vanity!"

"Judge as you will, Ethel, our thoughts are too far asunder to admit of considerations of a certain kind being taken —."

"Nay, do not change your intentions out of consideration for me. How amiable you are always to mention the feasibility of taking considerations! I have accommodated myself to all your Coketown relations and affairs, I receive all your guests, since your fathers last illness and death I have even accepted the reconciliation offered by Miss Ansted. Do not consult my taste in any decision of yours. What matters it to you, whether my respect for Richard Lansdale be even a little more affected yet or not?"

Richard advanced an excuse to leave the room, withholding any answer to Ethels last effusion. As resolved as he was that the ladys opposition should not hinder him, as vexed was he with the opposition itself. Something in his own clear intelligence made him concede justice to a part of his wifes objections. Her observations took

the fresh savor out of his and his child's grand boon. He had almost to admit to himself that he should accept the honor chiefly for the vain enjoyment of it.

Ethel remained behind in a dreary frame of humor. So the two often parted after a colloquy. It was best not to refer at such moments to the visions of their youthful courtship and they were very far removed indeed, by this time. The mistress of the mansion was shortly interrupted by the announcement of visitors, Who should thus come to surprise her but her sister-in-law from Liverpool, Gwendoline with her second son? The latter, who could not by any possibility be called Bertie now, but was promoted to be nothing but Albert to his very parents, accompanied his mother on a trip to Edinburgh, where they had an invitation from friends A fine young fellow he was of twenty-five, a young cavalier to smooth the journey for Mrs. Lloyd and to pay his respect to his aunt on their transit through Coketown.

Gwendoline Graham brought sweetness yet with her, as she did of old. Her handsome raiment betokened that her husband had never stood still in his material progress in the many years that were past. But only modest content was mirrored in her countenance, what lovely pleasure as she leant on her tall son's arm! Ethel's soul was genuine enough under the bane of her mortifications to gladden in the smiles of her brother's wife. The two ladies conversing on the sofa in affectionate, confidential attitude, faintly recalled the time, when expectation was pure and love reigned uppermost. The days of Hoylake, when the two sisters watched for Richards coming, the months when Albert was a babyboy and Cupid dodged behind his cradle.

"How is Richard?" Mrs. Lloyd asked of course.

Ethel spoke of her husband as a woman speaks about the consort with whom she is not happy: ignoring the ruffled state of temper between them and concealing the

never-healing sores of their intercourse. Gwendoline, who knew as much as was obvious about the family disagreements in Mrs. Lansdales home, was not admitted to an insight into the actual complaints of the married couple—no one was. On the mothers heart mouldering in Smithdown Churchyard, perhaps the tale of Ethels regrets was written, but that page was closed now, never to betray and accuse upon earth. It was left to the imagination of those who weighed the question with interest, to suspect how far Ethels lot was rendered sorrowful and deficient by her disharmony with Richard. Before all the world the Lansdale matrimony was as little approachable by criticism and doubt as other pairs take good care to be, unto the nearest confines of the circle that surrounds them.

It came quite natural that Mrs Lloyd drifted into a comfortable chat with her sister-in-law, without bearing very forcibly on the sorry secrets of Mrs. Lansdales existence.

„We see very little of you in Liverpool now,” Gwendoline said. „Richard was in the habit of paying me flying visits whenever he went to London, once, but he has disused the custom of late. Aunt Helen writes that Richards feelings are so absorbed by Grace, he has no time to think of anything else. But I don't believe this, I am not getting jealous of your darling, don't think so.”

„I was fain to arrange a meeting between us in Coketown,” the buxom lady continued, „because Albert has to make his adieux before leaving on his voyage. His father deems it advantageous to send him on a continental tour, and resign him I must. Ah, there is no keeping those sons to ones self.” As the white cloud of a summer day the reflection passed over the brow of Lloyds contented wife. „First of all you are eager to hear about your brother Allan, of course. There's not much to say about him, not more than you know by his letters, I suppose.

They are living very, very quietly, nothing but home-life, nothing to make a tale of —"

"They are exceedingly poor, going down, I observe, with bad times or rather with Allans old ill-luck. I infer their straightening fortunes from involuntary indications in my brothers communications, he never let fall an open avowal or complaint."

"Oh dear no, I don't think he would. Allan is fatally poor, but the family is rich in itself, so uncle Arthur says. They have not even a servant now, Diana is over head and ears in house-work. What a blessing Allan married such sort of a wife, one who revels in duties which would suffocate many a finer ones spirit. The care she takes of him is touching, we all love her for the heart she shows. There have been many little ailings and sicknesses which Allan scarcely mentions to you perhaps. And Diana always exerts herself so zealously to satisfy the intellectual demands of her husband, apart of that, she's a true wonder of diligence."

"We scarcely should have fancied once that we should still come to sing her praise thus. What can be made of people whom one least thinks of!"

"Indeed. We have no care on Allans account now. It's a pity he is so obstinately self-contained, that no one is allowed to help or serve him in any way. His own means and his own luck he is decided to live upon, no one reasons that prejudice out of him. There was a lucrative druggist business in Birkenhead on purchase the other day, Lloyd wanted him to buy that, but his brother would not hear of it. Lose other peoples money by his unlucky hand, he said. Well, poor Mr. Kenyons business will always support him sufficiently; he is putting by some savings now, I believe, against the time when he and Diana will not be so active as they are now. As to Arthur Alexander, he wants to go to Australia like his grandpapa."

„To Australia?"

„Yes; he is a sensible boy at all events and whereon he sets his will now, he'll have his purpose fixed on yet as a man, I fancy. We often have him with us at Birkenhead, we should like to have his parents too for the good air and the recreation; you'll imagine though that they never have leisure.

But the news of the day, my dear Ethel, are, that Mr. Adams has got the living vacated by Mr. Benedicks death."

„That is a fair advancement for him indeed. A great relief for him and Maud, they must have been contriving too a long time with that large family of theirs."

„Oh, Maud says she'll be quite lost out of the old parsonage. She don't know if she'll ever like the great house and the one thousand a year. Maud loves everything from sheer length of acquaintance, be it the ugliest, dirtiest vis-a-vis you ever saw, so I suppose she'll love the rectory in good time. All the children appear thrifty, which is very fortunate, as they are so many. That family always seemed prosperous to me, even in the days when Mr. Adams had just bread for his own table and a few poor, and no more. Your sister absolutely takes delight in everything, the more little bothers the better and the more obligations the merrier. If one only had her humor! Diana has some of her spirits; they are close friends, the two, so Maud regrets it particularly on her account to leave the old neighborhood."

„How I wish to see them all," Ethel observed with a sigh when Mrs Lloyd had emptied her family bulletin.

„Why don't you come then, dearest? Though our poor mother is dead, you ought to continue your visits, stay with me, if that suits you. Richard is sure to favor this arrangement. You must come to see your nephews and nieces, or they'll soon be all grown up and scattered about. Do you remember Mr. Adams books for little

children, his stories and fairy-tales? He gave up that task soon after he came into the curacy of St. Bartholomews; I don't think his own boys and girls have ever read his pretty fictions Mr. Adams has had so little time to spare since then, nor will he be less occupied in the future, having got only the more scope for his superintendence. His eldest daughter is helping him a great deal; she has a comprehensive mind for study and a wonderful love for the parishioners. Alice is considered the beauty of the family, Ethel, of the Liverpool family, I mean, I don't infringe on the department of Grace."

"Grace is a Lansdale," her mother remarked in a low voice, as if sadly.

"Ah, and you must send Grace over to me in one of the next months I will have an explicit agreement with you or you'll put it off till the dear girl is married"

"The last time you invited our daughter, Richard made you promise not to take her to see Allan and Diana. When Grace be married, I hope she may come to visit her Liverpool friends more freely, as I know that she is very affectionate towards them all"

"I'll insist upon taking her unconditionally this time. I'll speak to Richard, you shan't have any trouble of this kind," Gwendoline replied, suddenly checked in her pleasant chatter by the lurking spectre in her kinsfolks cupboard. "When Grace is married I'll advert again to what you said just now. Maud could well afford her hospitality too under her novel circumstances, and would delight in being able to do so — —" The lady faltered a little, treading on the delicate ground which she had rather heedlessly landed on in the beginning. At that instant Miss Lansdale came in from her usual morning ride and joyously greeted the presence of her relatives. Neither of the cousins appeared reserved in the cordiality of their salutation, although their intercourse had only been limited hitherto. Grace looked

charming. It seemed however as if Bertie might incline to maintain his cousin Alice as the beauty par excellence against this radiant young rival in the family-gallery, however cautiously his mother might avoid the comparison. There was something in his devout attention, while Mrs. Lloyd expatiated upon the qualities of Mauds eldest, which looked really very much as if there were no keeping, those sons' to their mothers apron-strings. Grace on her part certainly thought him a very handsome young kinsman, so no doubt Alice Graham had found out that likewise with her much more ample opportunities in Liverpool.

“How nice that you have come, aunt! How delighted papa will be to see you,” dimpled Grace cried, as she retired for the moment to change her walking-attire.

About a week after this visit of Gwendolines, Richard returning home in the afternoon, was received by his wife with unexpected news. His first question was after Grace, who generally made a point of greeting him upon his arrival. She was to pass the evening at a friends that time.

“Grace has not gone to her party yet?” the father asked.

“No, nor will she go at all to-night,” was the reply. “She feels unsurmountably weary, she says, and has no appetite to come down to dinner.”

“What’s the matter with her? We are not accustomed to anything like that in Grace.”

“Only of late she has been occasionally complaining of pains. It is the old cold yet, I fear I’ll call in the doctor to examine her with care, though it is but a trifling ailment I trust.”

On the next afternoon Miss Lansdale embraced her father once more as bright and blooming as if nothing had happened. Yet from that day a gradual change crept over her, silently, secretly, insinuating itself into a custom. She began taking to retirement more frequently, pleading headaches and drowsiness. Her light spirits struggled with an

encroaching dejection of temper, sometimes the former sometimes the latter were in ascendant. The medical attendant interpreted Miss Lansdales state of health as a case of anemy. In consequence of this explanation, the anxiety roused by these unwonted symptoms in the parents, was tolerably appeased. Grace was watched by both however with all the fonder solicitude, growing more than ever I fear Richards spoilt child. She always rested a ready subject to his indulgence, whatever alterations might be, accomplishing within her. This seemed the one thing evidenced as sure beyond any change and age: Grace Lansdales being her fortunate fathers toy and darling by decree of nature and destiny.

Chapter XVIII.

A Sad Farewell.

A sight for the small boys of a poor street in L'pool; a policeman with a prisoner whom he has handcuffed. It was the early hour of morning, when no idlers except the notorious boys are about, but everybody who walks the pavement is bent upon some particular object on the contrary, and has no desire to detain himself. The interesting pair came up together, with an appearance of not being quite on bad terms, rather confidential and companionable in short. The two went on until they arrived before the well-known shop that was Mr. Kenyons in days of old, there the prisoner suddenly drew up and entered on a sort of parley with his conductor.

The former seemed to be persuading with great earnestness, sustaining some petition until at last they both entered at the shop-door near them.

To the generation now in course of growing up the fa-

miliar place is not allied to Mr. Kenyons name any more, but is naturally appropriated to its present owner Mr. Graham. Some few alterations had come to be made in the interior, obeying new suggestions of convenience. Since the good old couple vacated the premises to remove into that sphere which we picture fair and peaceful to those who deserved a serener lot than earth usually gives, their successors had come to occupy the house and spin another life away within its ancient walls. What formerly had been the surgery Allan and Diana had converted into their parlor, finding ample room to compound the necessary preparations behind the counter. Two small chambers in the upper story were given to uncle Arthur, who had committed his old days to Dianas care, when he resigned his office into younger hands and Martha Reed was glad to take some years of rest yet with faithful relations of hers.

The master and mistress of the house were at breakfast with their son, Mr. Clare taking a longer mornings slumber and having his cup of tea at his own leisure later on in the day. They were all three very comfortably though quietly disposing of the early meal, when the bottleboy burst into the chamber from the shop with rather a scared face. "There's a policeman insists upon seeing you, ma'am," he announced, much as if the manner of the unprecedeted guest had inspired him with a suspicion that he might intend to handcuff Mrs. Graham also.

"Me?" exclaimed that lady, blanching, it is true, under the exciting aspect of the communication.

"Yes, he swears that it is you and not master he wants to see, and he's so impatient, and the other man is so fierce —"

While he was yet relieving his shocked feelings, Diana had hurried into the shop. Allan followed her, after having sent the boy away by a hind-outlet, closing the intermediate door as he stepped into the surgery. His wife

was standing before the counter, gazing into the eyes of the policemen's prisoner.

"I wished to see you once before I was off again," the man said, in a sullen, mumbling voice. "By a wonderful hap that old holdfast leads me just past your shop and I wouldn't pass your door, no, if I could help it. I won't have you coming into the prisons and low places to see me, but in your own house I'll say good-bye to you, when I'm going, to return no more, I bet. I knew you was married when I came home from the colonies and never did I go near you, not to bring disgrace and disturbance upon you, my child. Yes, my girl, you were happy, and I was resolved to let you be happy, though it had saved my life to beg a morsel of bread from you. Never have you heard anything of your father, have you now, Diana?"

"No, no, but would that I had and we might have helped you, so God had willed," the poor daughter cried, breaking into a flood of tears and looking at the well-known dis-honoring attributes on Mr. Larkes' wrists.

"On what reason is he taken into arrest at present?" Allan meanwhile inquired of the law-officer.

"For killing a man, the hoary old sinner, in a tavern brawl," the constable complacently afforded information.

"Jack, the son of old Mrs. Rutherford, who died of delirium tremens, it was. And that, do you know, my girl, because he allowed himself a jest about you. Yes, they had leave to talk all manner of infamous things around me, and now they came up to talk about you. They knew that I would shut up any ones jaw that wanted to drag you back into our foul hell even by a word."

They knew what they did and I did my deed. I'm glad I've done it, I exult, I triumph over it" The all but brute of a man turned round towards his keeper and laughed, a broad, blasphemous laugh. Thomas Larkes had

fallen a good deal lower since he was in that same place for the first time, many, many years ago.

„Oh father, father” Diana cried in cruel torture, „oh father, don't speak thus. See how my lot has changed and think how yours might have changed too if you had come to us and confided in your daughters love. Oh my dear unfortunate dear, make peace in your soul — and you are going, departing again, out of our reach to those places of damnation where they never pray — —.”

„Now ma'am, please don't make it too lengthy,” here the policeman interposed, the master of the proceedings. „It was an unprecedented grace I condescended to grant as your daddy was so very impertunate, and as, being a father myself I let myself overwhelm by his screechings. Yes, I let myself overwhelm by compassion,” the man of justice ruminated, driving his knuckles ruefully into his eyes.

Some spark of the astuteness of ancient days forked up in Diana as she observed quickly: „Why, sir, I ought to bring you out a cup of tea this raw morning in gratefulness for your amiability.” And with astounding collect-edness she proceeded to fetch him the alluring beverage, which was to protract her last interview with her father.

Diana did not shrink from him, from that shape of foul sin, her tears wetted that debased bosom, they washed a small space clean perhaps in all the blackness of deeply furrowed vices. The policeman took one gulp from the cup, another, a third, then he put it on the counter, shook out his breeches, which had got puffed up over his boots and said: „Now I really cannot have prolonged this any longer. You must say good-bye to him, ma'am, it's just the same a minute sooner or later —” with the ready consolation of a man accustomed to scenes of trouble

„If you could but take off these irons for just one instant, to let me embrace my daughter,” Mr. Larkes remarked.

„Ha, ha,” laughed the constable much tickled by the underlying humor of the suit, „a good stroke you would make by your fatherly affection.”

Fettered as he was Diana threw her arms around her miserable parent, he bending over her and whispering in her ear: „After this I am dead for you, my child. I've sworn not to darken your path, since I knew you was provided for. This was an extra to-day. Cursed and torn by two million fiends will I be if ever I speak to you again. How you cry; you cry little now generally, don't you?” He imprinted a sounding kiss upon her mouth and looked up, brazen and bold again.

„You are a man I honor, whom I shall thank unto my grave,” Thomas Larkes said to Allan. „Sorry I can't shake hands with you,” he added with a coarse humor leering out of his eyes, which was rewarded by a ready laugh from the policeman.

With this pleasantry the extraordinary morning visitors turned once more upon their luckless way. The white-haired malefactor, forfeited to live and die upon guilt, abandoned and repulsive in his every phase of appearance, save in that one pure inheritance from nature, the love for his child. Allan looked after the pair as it went down the street, then his solicitude called him back to Diana, whose feelings had been so rudely shaken during those brief moments. He made her return into the adjacent breakfast-room, where Arthur Alexander, obedient to a word from his father, had never stirred from the table, while the strange scene was going on in the surgery. Except a few ejaculations uttered in a louder key the boy could not have understood anything of the proceedings outside, which persuasion was corroborated by the expression of perplexed wonder in his countenance besides.

Diana, without taking heed of anything, repaired to a corner, where she sat, one fit of weeping succeeding another.

Her boy, relieved from his duty now, rose hesitatingly and approached his mother, where he stood before her, rather awed by her violent grief it seemed. Allan made him a sign and led him from the room to the foot of the stairs in the cabinet.

„What has happened to mamma?“ naturally the lad inquired at once, lifting his frightened face to his fathers.

„Your mamma will be very sad all this day for a reason which you had better not know, Arthur,“ Allan replied in his quiet, straightforward way. „It will pass off in its own time by and by. Make ready for school now, my lad, and pass in review those historical dates which we went over last night.“

The boy retired acquiescently up-stairs, holding his fathers sentence as definite. Allan stood still a moment and then came after his son. „You'll try to cheer mamma when you are home this afternoon and be doubly good, not so Arthur?“ he said, laying his hand on the lads shoulder.

„Yes papa, and am I to say nothing to her before I go?“

„Better not, better not, wait for the afternoon. I'll tell mamma that I let you out with your sandwich and things.“

Having despatched the young scholar, Allan returned to the attempt of soothing his wife. She had grown a little calmer as she received him with these words:

„Oh Allan, would that my father had come to us on his return from Australia. Oh speak, love, would you not have had pity on him, as you had on me? Would you not have shared an honest bread with him and kept him back from further degradation? He is my father, Allan, and he was never bad at heart. No, no, he is not bad. Am I bad? He is just what I would have been but for you, but for you in the whole wide world. I am no better than he is, and he no worse than I am. You'll bear with me unto all eternity, I'm sure you will and you would have shielded and preserved my father.“

„I certainly should have tried to do what I could for him,” Allan replied, affirming the fact, although carrying out the problem in rather a doubtful musing. Mr. Larkes might feel sincerely grateful to him perhaps and his professions of respect might not be vain, yet would this, together with the reprobates one chaste passion not turn a wheel in his unholy course. Holding him in just regard, Mr. Larkes would experiment his intuitive cunning, his habitual perversity upon him quite the same, the strength of good would have no space to unfold as it found in Dianas youthful, womanly character. Allan, however little of a psychologist, fathomed this by the evidence of his experience and the inspiration of his common-sense. When Diana ended an outbreak of repining by crying: „And now he is lost, he is verily lost, is he?” her husband was loth to admit it towards her, but he was sure that Thomas Larkes was lost to man, though not to God.

„Allan, will you see him once more, though I may not?” Diana demanded in a piteous tone, of her husband.

„Will you take him my New Testament into the prison? He will keep it at least kindly when it is from me. Perhaps he will look into it tenderly because it is from his daughter. He has fingered many a New Testament, I believe, but he may come really to regard it when he loves the book as a keepsake.”

Allan assented willingly enough, it may well be supposed. A few days having elapsed, he once said to his wife, having been absent upon a somewhat long walk: „I have given him the bible, Diana, and he appeared very much touched. He seemed not desirous to protract any conference with me, but rather thrust me away — I think he would not allow me to get far in talking with him. Gods blessing be on his daughters gift, my dear.”

„Can we do no more for him, Allan?”

„The law has claimed him, he was put himself beyond

our reach. God help him, I don't think we shall be able to do so.

We can only be very tender with any soul that might fare as your father fared if no one took timely care."

Many a kind look Allan Graham cast around perhaps, as he unostentatiously wended his way through the busy streets. His was the unsuccessful life of a man who is easily found to lend, who gives away his money before it accumulates to return interest, who clings through fondness to a thing, which prudence would long have innovated and rendered more profitable. Such people never grow rich. They just keep afloat, with a serene trust that their small substance is in Gods keeping and a principle of economy that will keep them straight between their charity and their own necessary wants to the end of their course most probably. There is a thing that returns interest in their management and leaves them no leisure to meditate on the supposititious advantages of ampler wealth, the kind words and offices lavished on the neighbor, the needy one especially.

Allan had freedom to dispose of his means now at least. When Mrs. Graham was called to her fathers, she bequeathed the little she had of earthly property to her second son, the one of her children who stood most in want of it. Long had this wish and desire of the loving mother been confided to members of the family, and it needed no legal seal to enforce it. The written will was found among her documents however, to ensure remembrance in all cases. This inheritance was destined to cover the remainder of Allans large-proportioned debt to his brother, it relieved him of an obstructive weight upon his scrupulously honorable progress.

A real pain it was to sell any of the furniture from the old Kingstreet abode. Preferable then rather to give

supernumerary moveables away to some people where Diana knew they would be accepted with thanks.

Allan could never conform himself to pinch and screw the current value out of any of his proper acquisitions. His wife played into his hand by hitting continually upon opportunities of discumbering himself gratis of any available property. There are wonderful chances of doing a service and making welcome donatives, which are only disentered by speaking with many people and attending with an observant ear. Diana did sometimes hanker after a little more wealth, yet it was her own fault as well as her husbands that it did never arrive, for she could neither keep their shillings with a close hand. A druggist-shop is the very place to be retained continually at the point of compassion.

I wonder if Allan Graham ever reverted with a smile to the inheritance promised him by his father on the latters departure for the colonies. Hope never ends if one wills it so, expectation may tease one into the third generation occasionally, but until now Mr. Graham senior had not made good his boast. Having written once to his wife, announcing his safe arrival in Australia, he had vanished into the unknown sheep-pastures of the New World. Whether he lived or had died, whether he was disappointed or prospered, the waves of the Great Ocean had closed over his track and told of him no more. Once, when standing by his mothers grave the thought of his father recurred to Allans mind, he mused: „Diana has almost had more of a father than I, depraved as he is. We will both not know where to imagine our sire in the end, I suppose, yet in her last sigh will Diana include the wish to see him again, softened and purified, I believe.”

It was no vain phantom of his grandfathers success that inflamed young Arthur Alexander to the dream of following him out into the land of pioneers. The idea

was prompted no doubt by this previous connexion, but it had developed into its own life and its peculiar, practical energy. Allans son was a ruddy, fair haired boy, with no particular beauty or brilliant gifts, a goodhumored, matter-of-fact fellow, as there are thousands in Old England it is to be hoped. Though not quick in his studies, the lad quite satisfied his father as he was assiduously diligent. „He knows his learning thoroughly,” Allan would remark with a smile, „it’s all solid work. What knowledge he appropriates he’ll possess for ever and aye, his is no gathering of easy information which shifts with many a changing image. Better so.”

Delightful evenings were those for the fond father and the lad too, when they would go over many fields of instruction together, the former preparing the latters young mind for lifes great turmoil and struggle. The healthy vein of mirth in Arthurs character made serious Allan more playful than he ever had been even in his boyhood. The Australian plan was a subject on which his parent left him quite to himself. The former would not encourage him in the proposition, not to convert what might but prove a boyish fancy yet into a settled purpose, nor on the other hand dissuade him from a career, for which he deemed him not inadequately qualified.

Diana manifested herself to a degree dissatisfied with the homeliness of her boys talents. „How simple-minded he is,” she had often commented after watching the two, when some particular scientific fact seemed unable to force an entrance into Arthur Alexanders head. She was not simple-minded herself at all events; although she could never attain that cultivation of the intellect which only answers to an early and sound education, she was ever ready to catch up additions to her store of acquirements and maintained herself as a very entertaining companion. Like the majority of persons possessing natural wit who

having had their abilities neglected, appreciate therefore all the more eagerly the chances vouchsafed to their descendants, Diana jealously followed the progress made by her son. His accomplishments were the object of her ambition, her aspirations were centred in seeing him a gentleman, without reproach, without a scarcity in polite attributes. Her lively disposition sometimes grew impatient of Arthurs but ordinarily measured enthusiasm for the grand magic realm, knowledge, at his quiet persuance of study, as a thing that must be done, yet was neither rapture nor wonder.

Diana was an interesting, a recompensive character. No fullblown accomplishment can equal the inciting pleasure in leading a creature so awake to improvement and instruction through life. It was charming to observe the strict guard Mrs. Allan kept over her manners and sayings, her every word and movement, since the birth of her boy. An intimation from Allan originated this, when he remarked significantly how their responsibilities and daily duties should become so much more complicated with the presence of that child, as the parents were the foremost model of that developing existence. Pert expressions and informal doings had sprung up occasionally even after the purgatory transit through Mr. Grahams precarious illness; Arthur Aiexanders birth only proved the radical remedy for these excrescenses. Here only the requirement of constant attention became sensible, the unremitting caution was imposed, the ever present timidity of effecting harm commenced. That son of theirs grew up to be unconsciously the complement of his fathers structure of good. Fortunate perhaps that he did not crystallize into so exquisite a gentleman as Diana loved to vision him. Allan only launched him into action as a hearty explorer of destinys fair chances, giving the grandson of Thomas Larkes and Robert Graham the patrimony of honesty and affection to thrive upon.

Surely Dianas murmurings had no deep roots within her serious judgment as she testily ventured to complaint „What a pity the boy is so plain! If the little girl we lost only lived, what a darling she would be I fancy. She would be ten years old now, such a handy little maid. I am convinced she would be a deal cleverer and prettier than the boy, don't you imagine so too, Allan?"

„No, my dear, I don't," her husband replied with a frank smile. „I can't bring myself to imagine anything which is not and never was meant to be. Much less, if the existing is to be put into the shade by it. It's enough we have to do to draw our full account out of Arthur Alexander."

Chapter XIX.

Shattered Hopes.

At last a cloud has gathered over the head of Richard Lansdale. Is the world going to change, that evil is really hitting the consecrated to fortune, without the possibility of being averted, surely, deliberately darting at him its arrow? Is an alteration in Richards core perhaps written in the stars, when the externals thus turn upon him as they never were wont to do?

Let us wait and see, let us watch for the issue.

Tis no thundering downfall of his material substance, this fatality that broods over him, no danger to his glory and his fame, no threatening check to his triumphal progress through the admiration of his kin. The factories work safe, his palaces are not raised upon a soil of earthquakes, the very Lansdale mausoleum will stand for centuries no doubt to proclaim honor to its dusty, silk-clothed tenants.

It is but one calamity that is boding, the joy of years kneaded into a heap of shattered hopes and crumbling wishes: Richard Lansdale is about to lose the heiress to his fortune.

That insidious indisposition which had beset Grace since the last winter, was the threatener. Month after month had passed and it did not loosen its hold upon her. She drooped perceptibly and incessantly. Her parents decided for a sojourn in a more genial clime when the rougher seasons approached. A stay in Italy was fixed upon. Travels of this description had not been much affected by the manufacturing magnates of Coketown, thus this trip to the South was the first contemplated by the quasi millionaire Lansdale. Grace consequently, notwithstanding her relaxed spirits, was in a flurry of delighted expectation to behold the country of classic fashion. Her very excitement perhaps precipitated the fate which had stealthily followed in her shadow for many days already and only sought the fitting moment to step out and bid her 'Stay!'

A red stream of blood suddenly burst forth with appalling surprise and cast her enervated upon a bed of sickness. The attempts to raise her from it and combat her weakness were despairingly continued until the fatal word 'rapid consumption' was pronounced. With terrible strides the Destroyer made his way into the frame of the delicate young maiden. He did not listen to repinings, to evasions, to remorseful reflections, he proceeded to do his work in the time assigned to him, two months and five days.

Within the last fortnight the parents had relinquished all hope. Slowly, gradually, they had seen the inevitable approach. They ceased to seek a subterfuge from understanding the import of the doctors diagnostics, to defy the death-pregnant sound of that malady's name. Consultations of doctors had been held, the medical counsel from London, which Mr. Lansdale's resources even could

command, served but to render more absolute the fact of the unalienable disaster. The best nurses, the distracted mother ministered but to the invalids smallest want to prolong her hours to their utmost extent, not to recall her to the sunny days of the eighteen summers she had completed.

Richards friend, the Dean of St. Martins, had begun to advert in his conscience to the scruples and considerations which his sacerdotal office suggested. He called the agonized fathers attention to the propriety of gently preparing Miss Lansdales mind for the impending transition into a new destiny. Congruent with her whole natural disposition, she was giddy and frivolous even on her death-bed: this must not be. It was the strongest reason to awaken Miss Lansdale to a sense of her position, even at the cost of inflicting a physical disadvantage. The welfare of her soul, the eternal was claiming louder and more urgently for pious consideration, the mundane and trivial durst no more be allowed the ascendancy, as it still invariably had in the young girls perceptions.

Richard who at first tried to defer the duty, yielded to the conscientious importunities of his religious friend, as the dread moment seemed drawing undeniably near. He inactively left the Dean to the imposition of his propounded task.

„Say what you deem indispensable to her, do what you hold your duty as a man of your sacred calling. I will go out while you attend her, you and Mrs. Lansdale. I can't bear to be near, knowing that such a communication is being made to her. Do your duty, do it softly.”

Richard tore away into the streets. His brain was on fire with the relentless anguish of the last weeks, with the dire impression of the present occasion, with the unwavering spectre of the imminent parting. His stroll had no aim, no direction. He wanted to distract his thoughts.

The superintendence of the business had been given into the hands of a representative upon the occasion of the family's proposed journey. Mr. Lansdale had not yet resumed the conduct of his affairs, as it was a circumstance absorbing as much his attention, which altered his previous arrangement. His steps were therefore not impelled towards the regions of industry. By and by Richard pursued a fixed way, leading to the Coketown General Hospital. It was perhaps a certain inspiration in accordance with his inward torment that led him to review the new wing of the hospital, which had been instituted by himself in honor of his father's memory from his share of the inheritance. Wandering through the wards of the establishment, accompanied by the managing physician, Richard, having so far nerved himself as to be amiable as usual, came to a man of about thirty years of age who sat upon the edge of his bed. An anecdote was made out of the scene which followed, that appeared in the Coketown Herald next day. As people generally fancy anecdotes about persons of consequence, be they worth the telling or not, the circumstance ought not to be omitted.

"What is the matter with this good fellow?" Mr. Lansdale turned for the twelfth or twentieth time to the doctor, to inquire in ever varified phraseology a thing which he cared not a jot for the next minute.

"He is designer in Mr. Stewards factory and has got some noisome stuff into a hurt on his hand which poisoned his blood. Up the whole arm he has had pains and swellings, but he is almost well now and will be discharged soon."

The physicians account ending the patient of a sudden broke in: "Mr. Lansdale, pray, mark me, how I once have hated you and how I now have fallen upon your charity!"

"You hated me?!" cried Richard, surprised and interested.

„Don't you remember me, I am Walter Harvey, Mr. Clares little Walter of Liverpool. I played sundry tricks upon you, sir. Don't you remember?"

A stupendous memory for personalities was one item of Richards renown. „Walter Harvey? Walter, Walter, yes, I don't think I have forgotten you. Didn't you pull the chair from behind me once?"

„The very thing, Lord have mercy upon me, I did," laughed Mr. Harvey, bringing down his sane hand with tremendous force upon his knee. „You won't make me responsible for it still? I beg your pardon a thousand times, sitting here restored at your expense after I have been losing all my earnings laboring under this nasty affliction. I am rejoiced to meet you once more, grown up in reason now, sir." The man grasped Richards right hand with his disengaged left.

„How times have changed, honored sir. Boyhoods mischievousness has become replaced by manhoods reason You'll acknowledge the transformation, sir, with my earnest thanks?"

„A peculiar character," murmured Richard, not quite displeased. „We'll take an old friendship for granted," he said genially in a louder tone. „Can I do anything for you to show my pleasure at this greeting? Have you any wish now, as an invalid frequently entertains?"

„None, sir, thank you, relative to my present position."

„But general wishes perhaps. If you find yourself in perplexity upon leaving the hospital, come to me. I assist every man who undeservedly loses his chances."

„Thank you, sir, you are too kind. I hope my former employer will take me again after my recovery. What I have wished many times upon this sick-bed of mine, is to get back my watch, my silver watch, which I had sold before going into the hospital. I didn't like the hospital, now I'm sorry I did not go into it at once and kept my watch."

„A silver watch? I'll send you one to-morrow, my good man. Don't thank me, a token of the new confidence between us. Good bye, Mr. — what was the name you mentioned? Mr. Walter let it be, good bye."

As the generous-handed benefactor proceeded on his round, a trifle cheered by this unforeseen intermezzo, the man on his bed ruminated: „The same manner as ever, which I didn't like once. I don't know if I like it now, but, what I won't tell when I write to Mr. Clare, I've come to see what a patron may be good for and how it man serve to cultivate old acquaintances. It seems no wisdom to act exactly up to ones impulses always."

The record in the Herald added that notwithstanding the afflicted state in Mr. Lansdale's home, the watch was promptly delivered even on that same afternoon, to the man who was pleased to claim acquaintance with one of the lords of Coketown. Both were for a short time the gladder for their triumph, the man of wisdom and the man of generosity. Chance grant them many more such victories, ere they lay off the garb of this world and care for tinsel no more.

The gloom of the Feather-Row mansion casts its gigantic shadow over Mr. Lansdale again. Conceit falls from him for an instant and his heart thumps heavily in his breast. As he entered the sick-room, his daughter cried in an animated, though faint voice: „Look papa, here is uncle Allan come to see me."

Richard saw his brother-in-law rising from a chair by the head of the bed and meeting his glance. He started and bowed slightly to the unexpected guest; the latter, having ceded the best seat to the father, took a chair near his sister and Richard proceeded to the side of the bed.

As he stood there Grace caught his hand in hers and leaning her cheek against his arm, broke into a long, low weeping, her tears flowing so uninterruptedly as though

they would wash a great rock of pain at her heart away. It was a moment replete with mournfulness, one that filled Allans soul with gentlest compassion for his brother-in-law.

“They think that I am dying,” Grace whispered, as her father was bending over her. “Do you believe it too, papa?”

“How could I dare to believe it!” Richard cried, convulsed with the mute torture he had gone through, with the sobs of his darling shaking his frame.

“Were you not to take us to Italy yet, and were we not to inhabit Groves Hall and have you not promised to make me Lady Grace? Oh papa, surely I may reach all this yet, surely, surely I must not go without enjoying anything of this; go away from you and mamma and all my friends! It would be too strange, too frightful. I’ll try not to think of it, I don’t want to dwell upon it.”

“No, don’t, don’t” exclaimed Richard. “Let us depart from the topic. I’ll tell you something bright, my dear.”

“The Dean will see her again,” Ethel said in an aside to her brother. “My husband will not talk serious things with her, yet she is too little of a child to take the warning of death so childishly.”

“You have not spoken to uncle Allan yet,” Grace said, upon Richards last remark. “He leaves again this very night. His visit has surprised me so delightfully.” Richard reluctantly turned to his guest, whom he had perhaps resolved almost to ignore. “You are welcome to stay longer, Mr. Graham, if you please,” he addressed him, with a condescension which was meant to be obliging.

“Thank you, I only decided upon making this short call upon seeing that my sister was under exceptional trouble which I felt impelled to patent my participation in. I have made no arrangements to abandon the conduct

of my business for any longer period. I shall return to Liverpool by the last train to-night."

Richard allowed the answer to be decisive and returned with his whole interest to his daughter. The latter however did not leave him undisturbed to the impolite desertion of Mr. Graham.

"Papa," she began, "I have told uncle Allan how sorry I am that he did not bring little Moffat with him. Do let me beg uncle to send him to me."

"Little Moffat, who is he?"

Little Moffat was Arthur Alexander, because at the time when Grace last visited with her mother in Liverpool, Allans boy occasioned much fun by pointing out his musical friend as great Mr. Moffat and taking unto himself the counter-appellation of little Moffat.

"He is Arthur Alexander, my cousin. I have such a longing to see him again, since I greeted his papa. He is so bright and merry, he would make me forget that — that horrid idea. And if I really am to die, I should like to know how he looks now, before I go, never, never to see any one again."

Grace moved and buried her face between her handkerchief and the pillows, but she listened as her father said to Allan with a sternly compliant unbending to the petition:

"I hope, Mr. Graham, that you will accede to my daughter's wish. You will allow your son, I trust, to be my wife's guest for an indefinite time, some days, some weeks, as you may find it proper under befalling circumstances."

Mr. Lansdale repeated the request when Allan was taking his leave in the evening. As Grace too had eagerly pursued the subject in the meantime, the invitation was definitely discussed. The master and mistress of the house with their guest standing in the hall, where Richard had

contrived accidentally to join the scene of his kinsmans exit, Ethel suddenly exclaimed with ardor:

„Oh, if uncle Arthur only would come with him. If I could have him here to speak his blessing over my child. Peace would come with him, he would imbue Grace with a holier spirit, with the right Christian resignation and obedience. Oh for uncle Arthur to lean upon!"

„Ask Mr. Clare if he will not come. Tell him that my wife wishes for him, will you do me the favor, Mr. Graham?" Richard said quickly, dizzied by the loosened impressions rushing in upon him.

„Is it not taxing his strength too much to solicit this journey from uncle Arthur? It was only a natural suggestion that escaped me by force, I don't demand it to be realized," Ethel interposed.

„Uncle Arthur is always strong enough yet to help in bearing a cross," Allan solemnly replied. „Dear Ethel, I hope he will bring you the best comfort. We all are bearing your sorrow with you, all of us. Think of that, it may lighten its weight a little, may it not? Good by, my own sister, good by, I shall be with you in all your distress."

Yes, so he was, softly relieving a part of her grief, more than Richard by her side, with his own bitter load of pain. Next day Arthur Alexander arrived, accompanied by his uncle, sedate and intelligent, with an apparent fore-experience of sickness and trouble. He showed a bright countenance at his cousins sickbed, yet no reprimandable exuberance of manner.

„Ah, have you come" Grace cried joyfully, though rather feebler already than the preceding day, when she beheld her cousin. „How you have grown, but you are little Moffat, are you not?"

„No one calls me little Moffat now," the boy replied.

„But you remember Mr. Moffat, the great one, don't you?"

„Of course I do,” said Arthur Alexander, drawing himself up as if offended by this question. „He is the man I am going to imitate, he and uncle Arthur. Though I am not like any of them, mamma says. But it suffices when I love them, and bear them in mind always and do so as to keep Mr. Moffat my friend, wherever he may be, as long as I live. For Mr. Moffat would renounce me as soon as I did anything unworthy of Allan Grahams son.”

„How do you know that?”

„He himself has told me, before he died. I remember exactly how he told it me, the look of his eyes, the tone of his voice. He was very ambitious of me.”

„Perhaps you are like your papa.”

„No; papa says, every one has his own being, only in conscience there must be a universal accordance and in that I may satisfy or dissatisfy Mr. Moffat. He knows more of me than anybody else, because he is dead.”

The boy confidently pronounced this asseveration, though I do not think it was his father who had inculcated this belief in him. A mystical spirit had once whispered to him no doubt and flowed on as a narrow stream yet in his individual conceptions, not doomed to expand, but watering a small garden of fancy within his realistic disposition. Maybe also that Diana had planted this garden and kept it flowering with a casual hint or two. „I too shall be dead soon perhaps,” Grace thoughtfully remarked.

Arthur Alexander, meeting his aunt in another room later on, ingeniously said to her: „I understand now, why mamma enjoined me so severely to have very, very particular care of my comportment here and to pay attention how I disturbed you or not. You are going to lose cousin Grace, aunt, and you are very unhappy. Mamma was crying all the morning when papa returned and saying: „I know that sorrow, I know what it is” — because a

little sister of mine died, long ago, and mamma sometimes moans over it still upon occasions"

Ethel took her nephew in her arms and rested the load at her heart for a moment on his shoulder. „Does she?" the grief-stricken lady said, scarcely knowing what words she uttered. „Does your mother feel with me, does she weep because of what I suffer? Do you comprehend this tribulation, Arthur? Have you the eyes to see it without anybody telling you?"

„Papa and mamma told me nothing but that cousin Grace was badly ill and wanted me to cheer her. I knew that she was ill a long time," he said, as if in vindication of his dignity, „they often talked of it at home."

„Thank God for a sensitive heart," Ethel said, still pressing him to her breast, „you don't know what it is to have anybody, anybody spontaneously feeling with one. Your mother recalling the little girl she lost, it is a consoling image, it is a consolation."

Arthur Alexander was dutiful in paying his respects to his uncle, when Richard made his appearance. A momentary surprise seemed to come over the latter, as he beheld him, he gave him one protracted look of interest. For Arthur bore in his countenance a faint reflection of his mothers manner, and with it of a time long effaced from Richards selfish soul. Having taken the hand which the boy confidently extended to him between the tips of his fingers, he loosened his hold instantly and turned away. This was almost the only approach which the master of the Coketown mansion and Dianas son made to each other. A wonderful satire, this greeting, upon the impassioned flame of romantic love which once burned in Richards bosom for Diana Rowe.

A change was fast coming over the patient. Her condition was altering thus, that soon uncle Arthur was more desired at the sick-bed and Arthur Alexander less. Still

Grace was sometimes anxiously inquiring whether her cousin was yet there and evidencing that her morbid capriciousness would have been offended by the departure of her little visitant. Graces vital powers were rapidly sinking, she conversed little, at times she cried: the portent of her doom ever preyed on her still earthly mind. As the consummation of the trial was thus closing in, Ethel, by a strong influence of her religious disposition, became more collected. She had seen the fate decreed darkening, darkening for many weeks, until she had leisure to clothe herself in faith and bow willingly to Him, to whom deference is due.

Night and day was alike now in the silenced house, night and day no sleep came into Ethels eyes, save at the fitful intervals when nature exacted her inviolable rights. Her good uncle was her chief staff and stay, him she always called to aid in her uneasiness about the poor girls tune of temper. A holy balm was in the assistance of the clergyman, grown old in godliness of conduct and varied knowledge of humanity. His words of faith were like angels seeking communion with the fluttering soul of the dying heiress. On one occasion, deep at midnight, when Ethel allowed no one to wake but herself, and the nurse had been ordered to retire into the next room, Grace, recognizing her mother with dim, slumberous eyes, said:

„How very weary is this; oh so weary for me and for you. Perhaps it were better to die after all.”

„Dearest child, do not speak of dying in this sense. Contemplate it with a far more hallowed meaning if it must be thought of. This weariness would be patiently passed over, if it were determined for you to live. Put away the complaint of this tiredness and speak to me again, my darling.”

„I like to sleep and be without dread. Uncle Arthur

wants to soothe me, but I only love him, I cannot love the thought of dying. Oh, how I love him, how sweet everything sounds he speaks of. To-morrow he shall tell me of his and grandmammams youth, as he began yesterday. I like listening to that."

A touching meaning lay in the tone of this observation that besought her mother to leave her to the things of life. Ethel would not contradict the appeal, it sufficed to her that Grace took uncle Arthurs discourse thus in especial favor. After humoring the fretful invalid with some casual remarks, she sat, meditating upon the awfulness of the hours, when a being given into our ward awhile is gently withdrawing from our sight. She made no prevarications and fashioned no vain postulations, she had nerved herself to resign her daughter into the grace of the Omniscient who knew how she was reared so far and what good was in her.

Grace never came to disuse the custom of saying: to-morrow. A few times she pronounced it still and then the to-morrow she had imagined did not arrive. With a start she felt the touch of the Angel of Death at two o'clock one night and expired faintly in her mothers arms. Richard who had been called from his rest a half hour before, sat watching the melancholy scene in dumb, inactive despair. Even at the last the actual end came to him as a surprise, the final flickering of life in the consumptious is so treacherous, and who knows if Richard had not still experienced misgivings whether to believe that fate purposed indeed to be untrue to him. Once he touched the hand of his child, when it was fully cold with the chill of death, to persuade himself of the inflexible reality, then he would see the body no more. He would not see Grace dead, he left it to her mother to satisfy the mournful yearnings of affection towards the dear remains of a cherished being. Ethel hovered in the apartment

sacred by the presence of the inanimate tenant, clinging to the fading form, tending the dead body so long that it might be a relief some days hence to have her living image again in her memory.

Thus Richard and Ethel were apart once more, before the funeral bier of their only child, Richard fleeing the dolefulness of his bereaved home, Ethel decking with flowers the lovely corpse of the departed one.

Chapter XX.

Various Struggles.

In deference to Richards particular taste the term intervening before Miss Lansdales funeral was not unnecessarily prolonged. The sable pageant prepared in her honor was a piece of Richard Lansdales vanity again, worthy of the young lady whom he would fain have presented with a lordly crest and who was to have borne all the riches he had gathered with his agile, successful hand. Mr. Clare and Arthur Alexander stayed over the funeral; they followed the sumptuous coffin lost in a crowd of stylish mourners, who paraded through Coketown in an interminable line of carriages. The Dean spoke at the open tomb, one so humble as Graces old uncle only breathed a prayer over the corpse as it lay with the first fresh blossoms upon the death-bed.

Much sympathy was felt with Mr. Lansdale throughout his native town. There was not a distinguished family of the locality that did not send him its warmest condolences, appreciating the bitter severity of the blow which had shivered his dearest auspices of future. Eyes full of compassionate interest sought out his figure in the throng, soft-hearted ladies asked their husbands what sort of a

countenance he showed on the churchyard and in the haunts of business. That such a merciless visitation should have fallen upon the noble, the blessed, benevolent, this circumstance called the public attention even more upon the afflicted father than the mother of the defunct. Everybody comprehended how the magistrates ambition had revelled in crowning his young heiress with his splendor and how she had been, all in all to him. The cruel disappointment of seeing these brilliant hopes lowered into the earthy grave, who should not feel this and how many should there not be who knew of it, as the calamity happened to one of the foremost personages of society?

The day after the sad ceremony, Arthur Clare bade farewell to his niece. Ethel naturally was loth to part with her uncle, she would still cling to him as she had done with such relief and support during the previous period of probation.

„Oh uncle Arthur, can you not stay with me a little longer?"

„I think it ought not to be; it were better for me to leave you alone with your husband now. The event that called us here is past. Richard will probably not expect us to tarry longer."

„Ah no, ah no."

„My beloved niece, will you never be content with Richards companionship? Will your relation to him never regain in tenderness and intimacy? Are you entirely resigned to an estrangement existing between you and the husband you have wedded?"

„Would you question whether it could be otherwise?"

„I would ask you whether you are keeping yourself perpetually awake to the possibility of an amendment in this unnatural state. Whether you are ever on the alert to attack this false position at a yielding point, not giving truce to any order of things that opposes the vow you

made at the marriage-altar. Dear Ethel many things in this world are hopelessly wrong because people grow weary of resisting their anomalies. Wrong easily creeps in, but it must never be allowed its place, never be acquiesced in."

„Does the task of deposing it lie with me in the present instance, uncle? Can I hurl away the errors of my association with Richard? Have I broken with the natural presuppositions of our alliance, have I introduced an indignity or proposed an irreconcilable offence? Is it not Richard rather who has done this and shall I tolerate it?"

„It is for those who have not offended to be patient and work most good. I have held Richard in affection when he was a boy, a young man, a friend of your mothers house, I have seen you given away to him, when you were young and trustful, though grave and saddened by trials of fate. You are now alone with him again, now that the addition to your love and care is taken away, the full import of your daily existence rests on Richard again."

„In this sense the loss of Grace makes little difference, uncle Arthur, she was never well mine, but his. She sometimes left my feelings almost as desolate while she was with me as now when she is gone. No joy of mine that is not pain at the bottom, I think real sorrow is preferable to them."

„She was not yours but his. Oh how you make these distinctions! That is not the language of the troth you have pledged. Ethel, listen to an old man who loves you, who has administered the office of God, forbear to gaze upon your husbands faults, but wield the privilege you appropriated standing at the altar by his side, putting on the ring that sayeth eternal endurance. Love, Ethel; love has done greater things than temper the mould of a character like Richards."

„A renewed love of mine added to the rest of adulation

he is accustomed to receive would just pamper Richards self-complaisance to the utmost. It would not improve him but confirm his arrogance."

"Does your present attitude effect the contrary?"

"Besides I cannot love him, uncle. You know how I loved him once, you know me, — the faith that thus has ended bears the impossibility of another beginning in itself. Let those who were cold and strange to each other, call up the flame between them, like Allan and Diana, but don't ask me who have loved, whose living passion has been killed, suffocated, strangled. It has been cruelly withered, it is gone. Uncle, to you in this moment, I say so, because you are the next to my mother, because you are a priest to whom confidence assumes a holy nature. Not to any other being on earth do I pronounce this secret truth of my heart, for I am resolved to keep faith with my husband unto the confines of the admissible. If people augur, I cannot help it, but I shall not violate the minutest compromise of our bond, so far as I am able I fulfil."

"Stay, are you not saying too much? You assume a vast attribute when you aver that you fulfil completely. Who among us does that? Who of us can not ever take a new inspiration from a call to exertion? I have observed you during the few chances I had in your intercourse with your husband. You resent the slightest token of his imperfection, you never woo him with gentleness, you cast his foibles back upon him, you do not attempt to lead him over to your side. It is to give you a glimmer of happiness that I adjure you to be active in your duties, my niece — at present you are passive in the performance of them. Your heart does not work, you only keep the machine of external propriety in order."

"For nineteen years I have led a married life now, uncle, and in the first year I have lost my love-dream.

What change shall I still anticipate? I cannot imagine how it ought to be brought about."

"To make your life happier and your departure from hence peacefuller, reflect once more upon the power of love and whether you did right to let it die. The love I mean is no cajolery, no adoration of one object singled out of the Almighty's creation, no medium that could be miscarried to the abuse you fear. It is a godly impulse and motor, by whose agency Allan made a tender wife out of a stray he found in the streets."

"It is easier indeed that a corrupted soul be washed clean than that a self-satisfied one come to know itself. I sometimes ponder over it: is not here the meaning of the words of Our Savior, 'For it is easier for a camel to go through a needles eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.'"

"Do not seek the significance of the sentence thus. Only consider if from believing yourself rich in qualities you have not come to be poor in effort. If the presumptuousness is all on Richards side. You linger in blaming his faults instead of hastening to redress them. You have haughtily withdrawn your communion with him; by gentle steps one sometimes conducts a person to avow his failings of his own accord and to himself, which he would not admit to an external reproach and to his accuser. Early this dissension has stept in between you, a mutual influence and sympathy has been excluded. You have re-treated within your own self and said: God must forgive me if I find but a part of my oath possible of fulfilment. I cannot love nor virtually honor him. — My dear, you have but sued in the name of indifference. You have been so signally discontented that from the first year of your marriage you have been indifferent to improvement. Oh how would God be pleased and glorified if you could

still originate a change, still win the virtues from your husband's heart."

"Ah uncle, thus speak you, one of those whom he depreciates and ignores."

"Make him ashamed of despising those you love."

"Make him ashamed! Do you hold that easy? You ask me, uncle, to bring about that, which could but effectually emanate from Richards side, you ask me, while he shall rest inactive who is the real fount of these reflections. Conversion in him and all would be mended, regard him as he is, inaccessible to remorse and nothing will be done."

"I can only ask from you, Ethel. Let me hope in parting, my love, that the satisfaction granted by every sedulous trial be in store for you. Do let me hope in this. Perhaps it is to recall you the more to your mission with Richard that Grace was taken from you. I do not know why she may have been taken from him. Beloved niece I shall pray that at this end you may be beginning again."

Ethel did not acquiesce in her heart to the good ministers thesis, yet he stood in far too great respect with her not to cause a sincere impression by his suggestions. Who was right of the two, Mr. Clare in trusting that good is never forbidden entrance anywhere when it comes patiently, or Ethel in defending that a self-complacent mind like Richards is probable to remain for ever stationary?

At the moment of farewell, when Mr. Clare pressed her hand on the threshold, Arthur Alexander standing in the hall already, Ethel said with melancholy thoughtfulness: "Give my love to Diana, uncle, she has those who are most dear to me now in her keeping, you and my brother Allan. Her boy too, how happy she is, how much happier than I can yet hope to be."

Richard was driving up to his brothers stately house in Gleamington-Road, where his aunt Helen Ansted occu-

pied three luxurious rooms since Lansdale seniors demise. This lady had always succeeded in maintaining herself as a person not to be overlooked, although she was not the rich aunt to be inherited who sometimes assumes supremacy in families. It was a matter of course upon her brother-in-laws death that she would not retire into solitude and contemplation, but on the contrary adorn the household of another of her kin with that ton and wit which distinguished her. She decided upon Augustus Lansdales family as the best whereon to bestow her diplomatic and ambitious influence, this gentleman contenting himself with a pecuniary share in the parental business and living leisurely and indulgently upon his revenues. His children consequently needed an inspiring mentor to urge them into a more striving activity than their father displayed.

Notwithstanding however that Miss Ansted was engaged by new and youthful charges, at her age moreover, she did not decline in her interest for the pupil of her earliest and strongest predilection. She was the same as ever, as she received Richard in her private sitting-room, in just the right degree of mourning for Grace; the whiteness of her false teeth and the dainty lace-cap upon her admirably dark hair defying any one to say that she must have grown twenty years older since she was fifty. There was the same dignified pose, the unrelaxed polite austerity, the measured unbending of her stately composure obedient to her fondness for Richard.

"I have come to take leave," that gentleman said, showing by the manner with which he threw himself into an ottoman that he was more of a confidential and frequent visitor at his aunts than ever.

"What place are you bound for?" asked the lady, fixing a sharp pair of eyes upon him.

"For Paris, aunt, it suffers me here no longer at present. I need some distraction from the woful trial I have

undergone. I was resolved to depart as soon as the burial was over."

"Yes, change of scene, my poor Richard. You have selected the most appropriate end for a journey of this character, Paris is a cordial for the senses, exciting, dissipating, enlivening. You will not proceed to Italy, I suppose, too dismal association, though the brightness of climate is a great restorer of spirits. Do you know, I would advise you to extend your ramble to Spain, there the sky is sunny too and the novelty of views even greater. You have procured leisure I doubt not, to stay aboard for some length of time?"

"I need a mouth or two at the least to overcome the first impression of this calamity which has put me into disjunction with all the world and with Coketown in particular."

"You neglect nothing by your absence? The peerage-question will keep until your return? The definite moment was imminently pending in this month, I understood some time ago. Lord Swinton and the Duke of Coildom are in town just now."

"I have already declined the honor of the peerage."

"Declined the peerage!" screamed Miss Ansted, quickly suppressing her startled articulation, but lifting herself from her chair with one hand stemmed upon its arm.

"Richard!"

"For whom should I accept it, now that I have no one to inherit my prizes? Ethel does not desire the distinction. I myself have concluded my career, for me the world has finished. I have no one to live for any more now that my daughter is dead. I am considering whether I shall not retire from business and pass the time with travels or in country life at Groves Hall. I have signed the deeds of purchase for the Hall, and there I may still occupy myself with planning benefits for the tenants and the

neighborhood. The thread of the pursuits engaging me hitherto is cut off, it lies in the tomb of my departed darling. A peer I never shall be, I will not take the badge of nobility now that it cannot adorn my Grace as I had hoped."

"Oh you poor-spirited pusillanimous man! Were you not striving and advancing before Grace was born? Have you not seen what you can do and attain and does this not fire you to go on undaunted? You make the repute of the family, Richard, you have had one of the highest distinctions borne towards you and you refused it! Because you have no heiress! Perhaps the title could have been made to pass over to a nephew or an adopted son of yours. You could adopt one of Augustus' children or even Thorntons. Richard, look at the position you occupy, by your own merit. Considering your origin you are literally the first man of Coketown; you are an honored magistrate, the protector of the poor, the factotum of the rich in regard to philanthropic authority, public improvement, wealth, sociality, representation of the commonweal, you have influence, power, a seat in the House of Lords, for it was yours when you refused it. You can make your will law to a great extent, you dispose of opportunities infinite, I do not speak of riches — of power and a name, will you submerge it, living, in oblivion?"

Oh the ambitious woman appealing to the ambition of the man! With what withering indignation and scorn she reproached him with disregarding the glory, with abandoning the prestige of the family. The buried child should wrest the life-dreams of the emulous aunt from her grasp, the vision which the tutoress had attached as a talisman to the form of her foster-son. Forgotten be the tomb and the dead rather than that they should absorb one atom of the energy that should exalt the name to whom she had sworn allegiance. Forgotten be the tomb

for the possible chance of making that name immortal in the annals of Coketown.

Richards spirit was not to be roused yet however. It was in vain his aunt upbraided him and clamored at his ear that he should not forsake the noble industry whereto his successes had been linked, not the active circle that owned him as their illustrious leader. Having added several exhortation apparently without result to her dejected vis-a-vis, Miss Ansted returned to the introductory topic in not quite so sweet and sympathetic a manner as before.

“You go to Paris by yourself, your wife does not accompany you, I presume?” With the sharp look still, an abrupt and hasty mode of speaking, a fleet tapping of her fingers on the arm of her chair.

“No, Ethel does not feel disposed for a journey at present. She goes to Liverpool in my absence.”

“To Liverpool. To stay with her family?”

“Yes, I suppose so.”

“Ah it is agreeable to you now to have her stay with whom she pleases? At Mr. Grahams for a month perhaps.”

“With whom she likes. All is one to me from henceforth.”

“Don’t say from henceforth,” Miss Ansted remarked with a scornful smile. Say at this moment. You will not make me believe that the death of your child has unfitted you for your vocation in life. I shall talk with you again after your return from Paris. I hope the lordly title even will not be lost, only postponed. May they offer it you twice, all the better.”

“Aunt, relinquish the idea, it will never be. I have been too much disappointed in this triumphs being denied to my daughter, ever to long for it in the future. That is settled,” he said with emphasis, rather with a smack

of his old pleasure in balking his aunts desires, though unconsciously to himself in the preoccupation of his grief.

Miss Ansted met him with superciliousness. She understood that she would probably have to resign her exultant triumph, her beacon of pride, the title, but she would recede by paces only and make a stand but three inches behind. If here was a whim of Richards, give it the character of magnificence, of haughtiness, and back his talents, his restless ingenuity to retain him in the sphere of action which he threatened to disdain.

„Ethel is the abstract of home for me now. Let all be pleasant and she have her will as far as she can without troubling me in my private comfort. I am indifferent to her pursuits and predilections, I only wish us to go on smoothly together, as long as we are to survive Grace, survive our future and our hope. Fate has disarmed me, I see no motive in working and striving for nothing.“

Richard fancied the pathos of his lamentations perhaps, his grief was the newest toy of his vanity, for all that it was deeply sincere too. The part of a disconsolate father became him in condoling Coketown and would be eloquent in Paris. A confirmed mourner shut in with his consuming sorrow in some countrified hermitage has often been proved to do so to his great credit and augmented fame among his former society unto the period of his demise. Miss Ansted was disgusted with the rôle and impatient of the restoration which she expected time and the distraction of travel to bring about. She was almost ostentatiously indifferent to stretch her nephews visit longer than he showed signs of intending it and answered his elegiac phrases with thinly-veiled contempt. Her energetic mind could not brook this despondency, it chafed at the even momentary indolence which caused her nephew to

retract his established antipathies and opinions, his aims and principles with regard to family questions.

„We shall see“ she said with reservation, as Richard ever returned to the theme of his annihilated hopes and his wasted efforts, dwelling on the burdensomeness of life when its purpose is lost.

Miss Ansted was right in doubting that Richard Lansdales ambition would meekly subside into inactivity and that at fifty years of age his progress, the joy at his successes, the spur to winning honors should eventually be ended. The doubt was justified. His character could possibly take the direction of surrendering itself up to idle, habitual lugubriousness, but it might just as well catch the spark of his aunts genius on the contrary, verify the adoption of a lucky heir and perpetrate his endowments in a fresh channel. Would Ethel possess her husband more one way or the other? Certainly Miss Ansted would resolutely lay her hand upon him under the latter condition; spent in years as she was, she would plan and scheme with her nephew, have a share in his glories and a word in his enterprises. Then he would have her sympathy and her participation in the subjects of his consideration, then she would give a sigh to the memory of Grace and forgive her the turbation occasioned by her decease.

As Mr. Lansdales carriage rolled back over the pavement of Gleamington-Road, Miss Ansted sat in her boudoir; her fingers clenching convulsively and her face stiffening into austere, hard lines gave signs of a wrathful passion taking possession of her. She did not despond of the subjects she had advocated, she did not rage over those. They pricked and irritated her now additionally for the unexpected molestation they brought her, because she was afraid of having suffered one inexorable defeat. Let it twitch and twinge the arrogant lady, the enemy of Ethel, that stinging regret over a squandered title, over Richards

renunciation of the peerage! This is something at least in the midst of the many satisfactory exits she reaps and may reap still, something that overshadows the rest of her plans, her look into the future at this minute. It is a gnawing disappointment she will not forget, though Richard accede ever so fully to the list of her other counsels. Gambol on, little envious, venomous sprite, pay her in her own coin, laugh at what Ethel's daughter has done to her, give her gall as she gives gall to others.

She will sow new grain of disharmony between Richard and his wife perhaps when the strange heir should be adopted and the heritage be enlarged. She will thrust forward her influence in that case, having gained her point in wise manner to be his confidante. She will make her nephew listen to her, when his wifes feelings point in an opposite direction. For all this she has nothing but that one pang of baffled ambition, where Ethel's impulse carried the victory; it looks little, yet it is the eagle pecking at Prometheus liver. It is a rankling arrow whose barb sticks in the foibles of her breast.

Mrs. Lansdale was far from these thoughts of strife, when Richard returned home. In her mourning weeds she sat, reading her bible.

„How calm you are,” Mr. Lansdale said, fretfully, having loitered a moment at the entrance in contemplation of this picture. Ethel looked up surprised. In the Coketown mansion all approaching footsteps were stifled in the soft rich carpets that covered the stairs and rooms.

„Yes, Richard, should I not be composed under the infliction of the Almighty? It is our duty not to murmur what else can I do then but seek consolation?”

„You seem cold and unnatural. It is but a few days since the child is actually gone. I call for her at every turn I take through the empty rooms. As I figure to myself the interminable hours that are to roll on without

interest, without the joy of her presence, I cry out against the loss and cannot master my lament."

"If it was Gods will to take our daughter to another place I do not wish her back."

"Ethel, you have not loved Grace as I have loved her." He took some steps up and down the room. "I am impatient for the hour when the train starts that shall bring me to Dover," Mr. Lansdale broke forth, with drawing his eyes from a framed design that was executed by Grace.

Mrs. Lansdale rose and put by the Holy Book. "Are you" she answered slowly.

Richard turned to her with a sudden emotion. "Does it sound unkind to you? After myself, you are the one who must miss Grace most. I should become distempered in mind if I stayed in this house for a week longer. The air hangs heavy here with the memory of her illness and her end. If you need a reparation of spirits in a proportion to myself, may you find it, my dear, according to your inclination with your own friends or wherever you will. I wish you to be comforted and restored. How faithfully and untiringly have you tended her, so unremittingly and sacrificingly as no lady of your position in Coketown would have done, I know no mother in our acquaintanceship who would understand to nurse as you did our poor darling. I have admired, I have respected you for this. You deserve that I were more solicitous for your happiness, Ethel, than I have been hitherto. You may scarcely believe how grateful I am to you for your devotion to Grace."

Ethel bore her good uncles admonition in faithful remembrance. She armed herself with care not to repulse her husband, with the haughtiness and severity which generally tempted her. "Richard," she said, coming up to him, "it is strange that a mother should be thanked by her husband for the care bestowed on their common child.

How far alienated must we have become from each other for this to pass between us. I know, I am sure, it is whispered in town that in Grace we have lost the link that bound us together. O what a false position, Richard; how can you bear it in all your civic pride, how have I not rather broken than bent under it!"

„Ah, at last your haughty soul has stooped to remorse! At last you feel that the woman must lean on the man and cannot shut herself up in her own coldness. No, the link between us need not be buried with poor Grace. You are the one to share my grief, by nature you are that. I know you understand what I suffer from what you yourself must feel. Our blighted hopes, our faded future! Why shall we persist in dwelling upon troublesome differences when I care no more how the world may go. I wish to retire from our accustomed society and live in the memory of Grace. What can the gaieties of our former circle be to us in our irreparable sorrow?"

„They never have been much to me and would be less if by their termination I could gain in the ties of home," Ethel responded, curbing the resentment that was already rising at her husbands speech, in the loyal sincerity of her purpose. She laid her hand impressively on his arm. „We would both have to redeem a great deal in the past, if we would accept the warning included in our sorrow, the death of Grace, and begin to live for each other again with good will and intent. Should we not rely for consolation upon each other and might we not thus recover in some degree what we lost in our child?"

„Recover what I lost in Grace? Recover the beacon of my successes, the object of my amounted winnings? No, impossible. But it has been you, not I, my wife, who has elevated a barrier between us. My heart is open to you, open to receive the love you once promised me or to relieve the desolation that you must be experiencing."

Mr. Lansdale wooed for the last time the wife who suited him so well. People who understand him must know that his nature is more vain than proud. His ideal had been the woman who should adore him and his choice had been a dismal mistake. Still, at any moment that Ethel should be induced to scatter the incense due to him he would encourage her, oh so graciously, so caressingly. Richard would not have been loth to give Coketown the spectacle of ulterior domestic conciliation yet. Insolent, prying Coketown that winked at this one big gap in his hereditary good-fortune. What triumph suddenly to wheel round upon it and say? „What are you staring at? Don't you see that we are in peace? That the haughtiest of your ladies has been conquered by my qualities and is mine, truly mine by now?” Yes, this prize was worth making a slight advance to — in an unseen hour; it was worth cajolling Ethel a little for, the woman he had rescued out of occultation, the woman he had fancied for his queen.

Ah, queenly creature, how she looked now, half rebellious through the lofty impulses of her heart, half conciliatory through the influence of her genial counsellor!

„Husband, have I sometimes been too repellent towards you? But have you filled the place of tender trust by my side, when you have rejected my holiest feelings and thrown my truest love back upon itself? Allow me what is mine and I may endeavor to give you much — much —”

„Well, invite your nephews and nieces to Groves Hall. I do not care. I shall have my retirement there as I please. Are you content, Ethel? I concede to your desires, so that you do not complain. I am tired of these old worryings and bickerings. Give me balm instead of wormwood, my dear, while I rove abroad to seek a lenitive for my pain.”

Ethels patience was fast waning, still she collected herself. „And Allan?” she asked.

„Admit a limit to your exactions! Shall he bring his highborn consort here too? No, the young ones are independent, but he shall not have license to darken the threshold of my door.”

„I do not ask for so tremendous a privilege as to have any of my family visiting here. I am ready to make truce on minor conditions.” All Ethels scorn was in the calm moderation of her tone. Thereupon the scorn faded out and the single glory of a womans virtue sat enthroned on her brow. „I will forgive you all, Richard, and come as near love as I can, yes, I truly will, if in this hour, to me alone, in grave mood, you will do my brother justice. If you will own, that a coward before the trivial, mocking world you fear to hold him up as your equal, that you hate him because his example shames you, but that in your heart of hearts you know him to be the equal, the superior of the noblest man that ever was admitted to your hearth.”

Allans sister had done, for the strength of her feeling overcame her power of speech.

„I do not hate Mr. Graham,” Richard returned with marked indifference. „What are you speaking of truce, Ethel, we have not lived in open war, nor ever shall, I hope. You have not made me happy, as I thought you would; if at this late hour your could still have taken a resolution to do so, I should have been glad, if you can not I know that I have done my best. I do not reproach you nor reflect on your actions because my mind is too tired for that. Relief, relief from here, where I miss the one bright ray of our union. Oh, Grace, Grace! Ethel, never mention her again when I return, but do your duty, do your duty, as you understand to do so well. Is that my brougham? Will Paris work some oblivion? I shall not mind the mourning, but go to the theatres, and concerts and every distraction that be offered there.”

„His sorrow, his love, his future. I, I, I, all the rest are complements to it, Ethel whispered to herself, having gravely submitted to a kiss from her husband and seen him depart in his exclusive, egotistical grief. He had asked her to do her duty — that meant to keep up appearances decently before the town-inquisition. Nothing higher, nothing more humane than that. She would fulfil it in the sense of uncle Arthurs admonitions and in that of her womanly dignity. But no alteration would come into her prospects. Her gentlest yielding would but win from Mr. Lansdale a concession, a magnanimous grant of wishes, no justice, no frank acknowledgment of conversion. Future consequently lay monotonous and apparently aimless before her. The loss of Grace did not constitute such an epoch in her fate as in that of Richard. She always possessed the same devout consolation under disappointment and the same resources to keep repining at bay.

Mr. Lansdale has passed through the furnace of the saddest visitation that could well befall him. The result amounts — to nothing. His present despondency is but another form of his unaltered manner of being. Here he stands at a halt in his career, to be contemplated as he is, young or old, taking no increment in virtual quality, though he expand as he will in external attributes. An unreproached name, a mode of life commended by his contemporaries, blessed by the needy or the representatives of the needy at least, a benignant dealing open to investigation and courting emulation. In what should it occur to him to change? Against the obstructions extant in his domestic circumstances Richard has been a properly-behaved husband, it looks rather more as if Ethel had the fault of the chillness between them than he himself. His appearance on the stage of action is rich in fruit and blooming fairly as long as it lasts. We will hope

that Mr. Lansdale be not lost to the public now, but be blessed still with many days like his past ones, replete with deeds creditable and lustrous before the world and his own discrimination.

Does Ethel think that such a man should be liable to reform like her brothers low-bred wife, does she make comparisons between him and a man of quite another cast and station?

Let us close with an encomium upon Richard Lansdale; he is a model, a star of brilliancy to many who are not as gifted, not as active to popularize their advantages, not as diligent to rise into the foremost rank of their kind. — Ah that they became what he is upon the surface and let them then wish for humility and a heart!

To the end of their days Richard and Ethel will live on together, two select examples of earthly union and endeavor. Nothing dims Mr. Lansdales reputation. Nobody has license to analize Mrs. Lansdales moral attitude. The secret of her souls ideal is not for the world to read. She is not happy; that will cause no wonder — a fate like hers is no phenomenon. We think too much of happiness in the beginning and too little of happiness at the end. The paradisiacal dreams of spring are too ephemeral and the later seasons do not hold the creed that it is their mission to develop paradise.

Then let them endure things as they are and came to be, as we all do. We have but scant compassion to spare for unapproachable, cheerless Mrs. Lansdale. To place an ideal ahead of such a satisfactory personage as Richard Lansdale of Coketown, who could heartily second her in that? Look into her heart and read the name of her brother there? Who knows Allan Graham? Not the partisans of the ex-mayor, they only know Mrs. Lansdales pride.

Richard has done what he can and won the crown for mental excellence. Ethel, do not ask more of him, nobody else does, and if you have a right to do so, based on your proper superiority, consider that the time to make it valid has not yet come.

Chapter XXI.

Uncle Arthurs Prayer.

Allan and Diana had attended a sermon of the Rev. Sidney Adams one Sunday afternoon. It was but the second time they had visited their kinsmans nice new church, that yielded him such a comfortable living and so contenting a field for occupation. In the first instance this temple of Divine Worship was too far out of the Grahams direction to be much frequented by them, and in the second instance the tenor of its excellent rectors preachings was just sensibly out of the way of Allans spirit. He had found a chancel nearer to his haunts from which flowed a stream of heavenly promulgation more kindred to uncle Clares benign addresses of yore. Mr. Adams always was prone yet to quarrel with his audience and keep it tied short with very detailed rules. During the service no one could reckon how many times Maud might coax him at home to smile at a defaulter or pass blindfolded over an innocent transgression, it seemed as if he were just as awful as he spoke. Of course he was not, that party of young ones in the parsons pew knew that he was rather lenient than otherwise. Diana liked Mr. Adams orations better than her husband; she generally fancied strong tragedies and heart-rending stories. But then the Sunday sermon did not constitute her lesson of Christianity, it was nothing but an edifying undertaking

for the day of rest. Therefore the more stirring matter it contained the better, the more storm and lightning there was about it the livelier. She had her gentle admonitor of duty at home, her rule of conduct and her coadjutor in good. Mr. Adams himself was a pleasant, tractable friend out of his robes and his righteousness not so prim as to intimidate the one-time cast-away.

The congregation was rising to leave and the family group loiters under the church-porch, exchanging a few words while waiting for Sidney to join it. Maud is not a young matron any more now, let those call it to mind who see no change in her brisk manner and are inclined to take her children for her brothers and sisters. Mr. Adams has evidently not suppressed her animal spirits and to look at them both is to conceive the happy idea of a matrimony where neither husband nor wife has the preponderance over the other. I do hope that Allan is not henpecked by Diana sometimes, though it is clear enough he has gained the upper hand upon certain points. It was observed that since the occasion of Mr. Larkes' re-appearance Diana had grown unconfessedly humbler, especially towards her husband, as if that mournful scene had forcibly recalled to her memory what had come to be but a faint reminiscence by now. She had almost forgotten no doubt the imperfections of another era, when the past suddenly stretched out a hand and bade her compare Allans purity with her own purgation. Blushing Diana stopped; God bless her for that blush, God bless her for doing her best.

Uncle Arthur and Arthur Alexander kept each other company at home on the present occasion. Allan walked towards the intricacies of the town with Diana on his arm, after the clear-voiced organ in the bright church dismissed them. Leaving some breezy and airy streets behind they came into some very good ones, well-to-do and dignified,

where several worthy church-goers were also visible. Proceeding along the pavement they came up with one couple of the latter in particular, whose heads hopped for a while above the shoulders of intervening promenaders, until after the lapse of a dozen seconds it stood full figure before the Graham pair.

No wonder they ran against each other, bent for opposite directions, the one for the smiling suburbs of the town, the other for the hemmed-in focus of the population. That gentleman, faultlessly elegant from head to foot, yonder lady, fragile almost in her intuitive refinement, could only tread the common pathway to regain an opulent retreat after the incumbent devotional excercise.

The lady paused one moment upon perceiving her accidental vis-à-vis, then she held out her hand to Allan, saying, with a smile expressive of neither too much nor too little pleasure: „Mr. Graham; what a casualty. I hope you know me still?”

„Certainly I do, Mrs. Melville,” Allan replied, bowing. Winifred Melville turned to her husband.

„This is Mr. Graham, Edward, whom papa sometimes uses to speak of, Mrs. Lansdales brother” she explained, as she introduced the gentlemen to each other.

The tried officer was glad to make the acquaintance of Mrs. Lansdales brother. In this quality he seemed principally to find an association of ideas in Mr. Grahams behalf, as Richard had been Mr. Rosens guest at Ventnor still. Winifred made manifest that her fathers interest never slackened in regard of the second party to the memorable preservation of his life and that she would report their encounter that very day. She was in Liverpool with her husband making the round of affectionate relations and friends, who had not abjured allegiance to former Winifred Rosen because of her permanence on the isle of Wight.

„Papa” she rejoined upon a concerned inquiry of Allans, „papa is in excellent health and spirits. His energies are so strong that I frequently hear him regret his having resigned the active share in the old firm. Indeed he has so little to complain of that he laments his excess of leisure and enjoyment.”

Content with this pleasant information, Allan led on when the two couples had separated. Diana walked pensively by his side. Before her husband had uttered any observation she looked up and said: „I would not have recognized Winifred Rosen again from the time I knew her. You did at once.”

„I did,” Allan replied lightly.

This was not all that lay at the bottom of Dianas thoughts. Some heavy stone had to be heaved out of them. It came, rising, rising, as she disclosed more of her ruminations.

„Allan,” she said, pressing his arm a little, „when you had your first illness while we were married, that worst one, when it almost went wrong with you, I listened to many words spoken in your deliriums. It was generally nonsense — good God, a reference to that sad time makes me shudder, the remembrance makes me afraid, I seldom dare to touch it. But, Allan, in one of your dreams you said: ,Ah, Winifred,’ with such an accent and so plainly — so, so fervently. That meant Winifred Rosen of course” — dubiously. Allan saw what ailed his poor little wife. He was a trifle perplexed at this unexpected emergency. Perhaps he could easily have given an evasive reply and have appeased his examinator by the mere laconism of his rejoinder. This was not the impulse though to suggest itself to Allans nature upon however short a notice. He bent down to speak in a low voice, laying his finger on Diana’s hand resting upon his arm and looking tenderly into her eyes: „If all things had

been quite different from what they were and destiny had been the reverse of what it was I might possibly have asked to make Winifred Rosen my wife. And as it is, I am very glad I did not and reserved to marry you, my love."

Diana was struck dumb by this unhesitating frankness, she needed some time to dispose of the important intelligence. After her peculiar fashion she put it up in her brain after a while to be reconsidered and independently advanced some sharp remark as a loop-hole to her puzzled temper.

"Mr. Rosen seems to be vastly edified with Mr. Lansdale always," she commented sullenly. "I don't know what to think of his continuing in that strange predilection."

"Think, my dear," said Allan smiling, "that Mr. Rosen remains true to the remembrance which first predisposed him in Mr. Lansdale's favor — as in mine."

"As in yours, alem. When people are so blind and can't see differences. Only let me have an hours confidential talk with Mr. Rosen and he should change his opinion about your brother-in law. I wish I could."

"What sorry pleasure, Diana. And for what use? Would it have done you good having somebody else parading your faults before your friends, you little busy-body? Is Mr. Rosen's friendship for Mr. Lansdale doing harm maybe?"

"It's odious seeing a person enjoy a good opinion he does not deserve. You needn't have reminded me that people could find enough to say of me too. I hope I have led a righteous life long enough now to blot out my youthful blunders and give me leave to judge freely of my neighbors."

"Nothing was farther from my thoughts than casting old remembrances upon you. I have no reason to do so, God knows. Why will you sometimes understand a casual word so perversely?"

„Take care of making awkward remarks. People with crooks in their history are touchy.”

„You should not be touchy with me, who know that I never would hurt your little finger, Diana.”

Allans wife gave him a gratified smile and renounced the contest. „How happy Maud seems to have her sister with her,” she now said. „It's quite clear that Ethel would be much better in Liverpool than in Coketown. Now she has no child there any more it's a vexatious necessity for her to go back.”

„Don't put it thus; Mrs. Lansdale will never allow you such license of speech. There is that in Ethels matronly pride which does not permit us to decide if we ought to wish her marriage undone or not. My sister does not desire us to pry into her conjugal secrets and sacred they shall be between him and her or in her alone.”

Between Ethel and Diana there could never prosper a warm relation. Ethel too proud to unbend towards her lowly sister-in-law, Diana too alert in resenting pride to find a place near her. Yet their mutual esteem for Allan caused them to exert the utmost possible good-will in their intercourse. And at last Ethels leaning towards the cheerful genius of Arthur Alexander, the intelligent witness of her latest trouble, attracted the mothers commendatory eye. The way to a parents heart lies often through a child. Thus no cold nor unfriendly thoughts animated Diana towards the lady, who gave but scant consideration to the impression she made in that direction.

Ethel had taken up her abode with Maud during her present stay in Liverpool. The two sisters were passing that Sunday evening at Allans. The term of Mrs. Lansdales visit was drawing to a close, her husband having given notice of his return home for the following day. Ethel and Maud joined Dianas homely tea-table, recalling by the easy association of circumstances a time beyond the rigor

of later regulations and the shadow of departed Grace. Mrs. Allan grew a little out of temper as she listened to the unintelligible references and the unshared reminiscences which gamboled over the animated circle in her parlor. Maud and Ethel poured out recollections of the old King-Street home, Allan was all attention on the other hand and threw in a word occasionally. Diana unintentionally came to feel herself one too many in the group, while uncle Clare lighted up in a rejuvenescence of the past and his grand-nephew listened with the ingenious interest of his age. The subject now rarely enjoyed thus fully never slackened in its fascination until Ethel found it appropriate to break off and advocate the necessity of leaving for the night. The impending farewell was deferred to the morrow, only with Arthur Alexander, who would be away at school, the parting salutation was exchanged.

Ethel was very affectionate here and gave her nephew many an especial, cordial address.

"Give my love to uncle Richard," said young Arthur, "he scarcely spoke a word to me when I was at Coketown, being so absorbed in cousin Grace, but I liked him — he is such a fine, tall gentleman, he looks so gentle — I like him very much."

Ethel smiled, a smile of sad irony and turned away. Would she give unconscious Arthur's love to the uncle who looked so gentle, yet was so hardened against him and his?

The adieux with Master Graham ended, the visitors stepped out into the passage with Allan and Diana.

"Ah the boy!" Ethel exclaimed in a undertone.

"Thank you both, thank you, Diana, for not having taught your son to regard my husband else than he does!"

The rueful sense underlying this pathetic remark touched Dianas quick-feeling nature. Obedient to the moments impulse she cried:

„You mustn't say good-bye for long, Ethel. Don't pine your life away in Coketown but come here the most of your time. Never mind your husband, a run to Liverpool is what will do you most good always."

„That's not a lesson Allan has taught you; ,never mind your husband,'," light Maud could not refrain from throwing in.

„No," Diana replied, with such a contempt of the comparison in her curt rejoinder, that her haughty sister-in-law was pushed to the extreme of feeling offended on Richards behalf and of resenting the echo of her own quietly fostered opinions.

Into the dark the richly-dressed lady vanishes, humbled in spite of herself by the outcasts evident disdain for her lord and master. She was quite Mrs. Lansdale at that moment, neither Allans loyal sister nor the just critic of her surroundings. Setting at naught reason and the tragic story of her love she demanded respect for him with whom she had celebrated inviolable alliance. The pride of wife-hood was stronger within the lady than justice and the genuine sincerity of faith—farewell, Ethel Lansdale, you will fill your place as well as thousands of your decent sisters do until your name is engraven upon the Lansdale mausoleum. Farewell, you are as fit to bear your fate as another is and you will not permit even a friend to mention the wrongs you suffer under.

Diana Graham did not divine that she was desired to ignore Mrs. Richard Lansdales disadvantages nor was she conscious either of having hurt the latter so keenly when she stepped back into her parlor after a kindly leave-taking with self-restrained Ethel.

Having dispatched Arthur Alexander to bed next she remained alone with her husband hearing him comment upon the evenings conversation. Her interest was not entirely consecrated to the subject however. Diana only

waited for a suitable opportunity to ask a question which she had ruminated upon during the whole evening: „Allan, when you said this afternoon that you were glad to have married me and not that fine lady we met, was it because you have done a good work or because you are really content with me now?”

„Because you have been the wife meant to cheer my life, who have sweetened it with your tenderness and your honest good-will, gradually more and more since our wedding day, dearest Diana. Dearest of all living women, for what you are to me none other could come to be any more now.”

Strong, fervid words, intended to set the poor wifes fluttered spirit at rest, with the pure, unequivocal truth of a noble mans love. With all their force they fell upon Dianas heart, it leaped up and filled her eyes with tears as she asked:

„Then goodness makes love, does it, dearest?”

„I don't know, I only know that love makes happiness,” Allan smiled, stroking the golden hair of the bowed head.

„No, no, your goodness is the real truth of it all. How could you ever have loved me, but for your goodness. And how should God not have made you happy for doing the work you have done by me. I should once have thought it well impossible to come to what I have arrived at now, and after that I shouldn't believe heaven on earth impossible. Dear, dear Allan.”

They stood clasped in each others arms, a pair much more beautiful and eloquent than a youthful love-couple. For a few minutes an utter silence reigned. At last Diana lifted her gaze to Allan saying:

„Oh that I had been worthier to fill the place of your first love! To be your equal as she is!”

„My wife is the first of my equals Diana. If you want to measure your respective moral and intellectual qualities,

where the prevailing conditions are so different, I can't assist you, my dear. You of the two have had the will and chance to assimilate yourself to me and have done it honestly. You of the two are loving and liege to me, you of the two have been best adapted to share my lot and have come to earn all my fondness and faith."

"Yes certainly, you will pay the full duty for having made me yours. It was my jealousy that had arisen to torment me, but she is not your equal either, you have no equal. And she could never have known you as I know you, Al." —

Oh happy Diana, who enjoyed the fullness of that mans intimacy, happy Diana who understood the fortune she possessed. The morning after that nights talk she was sure to awake with that wonderful feeling in her breast which many of us have experienced some day or other after taking a great joy to bed with them. It is a lightness, an expansion of the soul — only that, ere slumber releases detailed memory and graphic reason.

The first to awake the next morning was uncle Arthur. The house was yet still, but a beautiful sun streaming into his little chamber urged him strangely to cut short his morning repose against the custum contracted in his later years. With sleep resting all around him, the aged man rose from his couch, knelt down before it and offered the days first sacrifice to God.

"Good Lord, bless our country with Thy grace and bounty and this dear city in especial. Bless the poor, be present to those who need Thee so much. Bless all my nephews and nieces, my grand-nephews and grand-nieces. Oh Lord, I pray to Thee on behalf of Ethel. Let her life not run out unfruitful, but give her opportunity to exert the greatness of her nature. Illumine Richard with the truth he has never yet seen, it is the lack of understanding that makes him so deficient. Help my little

Walter to be an upright man; good Martha, I remember you in my prayers.

I recommend to Thee this house, Allan, Diana and he boy. I thank Thee, oh my God, as I do every morning for the good that I see here. He took a life and he saved a life, but the one he saved will rise up greater before Thee than the one he took away.

Be with us who seek to do Thy will, who in the midst of our shortcomings and weaknesses strive for the glory of a high, eternal land where we shall all be assembled and united before Thy Holy Presence. Amen."

The End.

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